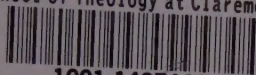


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Unitarian Historical Society

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LIBERALS AND LIBERALISM SINCE 1900

By David B. Parke

The Unitarian Church of Germantown

The year 1900 marked a significant transition point in the history of American Unitarianism. In that year the American Unitarian Association, under the presidency of Dr. Samuel A. Eliot, began to emerge as a vigorous, multi-function, well-financed agency of denominational expansion, and the office of president as a locus of denominational leadership. In that year, also, the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers was established in Boston to facilitate co-operation among the world's twenty million religious liberals; this organization is now called the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom, or I. A. R. F. In 1900 there appeared a remarkable volume entitled *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*,¹ its author a Unitarian, Dr. Francis Greenwood Peabody of the Harvard Divinity School; the work was a pioneer statement of Christian social principles, appearing seven years before Dr. Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, the recognized classic of the social gospel movement. Finally, in 1900 the progressive impulse in religious education found voice in the annual report of the Unitarian Sunday School Society; the aim of the "Sunday School of To-morrow," according to the report, will be "to induce the expression of traits in children rather than their repression. The old Sunday School was too much given to restrictions. The new Sunday School sets free. It aims to give freedom to those original tendencies in the young which are best,"² — it is not difficult to catch the revolutionary implication contained in these words.

Each of these four events — the election of Dr. Samuel Eliot, the founding of the I. A. R. F., the publication of *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, and the avowal by the Unitarian Sunday School Society of progressive principles in religious education — signalled important changes in American Unitarianism. In this essay I consider these developments in turn, relating them to antecedent events during the nineteenth century where necessary, and showing their relevance to our work today.

I. The American Unitarian Association had been established in 1825 "to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity." The issues at the founding are dealt with in my *Epic of Unitarianism*.³

It is only necessary to add that the formation of an agency for common action, including mission work, publications, and mutual encouragement, while uniting the Unitarians had the negative effect of alienating them from the more conservative Congregationalists, which is the reason William Ellery Channing declined to accept the presidency of the new association—he wished the Unitarians to emphasize their common bonds with the Christian community rather than to stress their differences, but the times had passed him by in this respect. In its early years, the Association commissioned missionaries to the burgeoning cities of the Midwest with the result that Unitarian societies were gathered in Rochester (1829), Cincinnati and Louisville (1830), Buffalo (1831), St. Louis (1835), Chicago (1836) and elsewhere.⁴ Gradually such mission work became the joint responsibility of the A.U.A. and the regional conferences, most notably the Western Unitarian Conference founded in Cincinnati in 1852.

The most significant changes in the A.U.A. prior to 1900 occurred in 1865, when the National Conference of Unitarian Churches, formed in New York City in the hopeful final weeks of the Civil War, “adopt~~ed~~ the existing organizations of the Unitarian body /i.e. the A.U.A./ as the instruments of its power,”⁵ and in 1884, when the A.U.A. charter was amended to make it an association no longer primarily of individuals but of churches, thus transferring ultimate authority within the association to delegates from member societies.⁶

In 1900 Samuel Atkins Eliot, the gifted and aggressive secretary of the A.U.A., was elevated to its presidency. Eliot was the son of President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard University and had, as a Harvard student, observed and shared in his father’s transformation of the Cambridge institution into a modern university; it might be said that Samuel Eliot did for the Unitarian Association what his father had done for Harvard. Ordained in 1889, Samuel Eliot served Unitarian societies in Denver (1889–1893) and Brooklyn (1893–1898) prior to assuming the A.U.A. secretaryship, then a full-time paid position involving field responsibilities and considerable travel. His ministerial career had involved significant contributions in charity, reform, and Indian affairs, and also in church finance. Samuel Eliot was the first president of the A.U.A. to enter office with substantial executive experience and conscious plans for expanding the functions of the association. He was to serve in the office for twenty-seven years, a record which was not surpassed by those who followed him, and which will probably never be surpassed since the Unitarian Universalist Association, successor to the A.U.A., limits its president to two four-year terms.

Although we lack a full-length study of the life and work of Samuel Eliot,⁷ it is possible to reconstruct the main outlines of his career and of the American Unitarian Association under his leadership. He was pre-eminently an organizer, administrator, and fund-raiser. During his presidency the invested funds of the association grew markedly in value, one estimate is ten-fold. The departmental system was instituted, and a large number of ministers drawn into the specialized work of the association in extension, education, and international activity. By virtue of his stature and energy, Dr. Eliot so upgraded the office of president that by the end of his term it was the foremost position of leadership in the denomination, replacing the pastorate of major churches and the deanship of theological schools in this respect. Symbolized by the erection and occupancy of the present headquarters building at 25 Beacon Street in Boston, the A.U.A. during Dr. Eliot's tenure became the denomination as we know it today.

Among Dr. Eliot's many contributions to organized Unitarianism are two which seem at first glance incompatible. The first was a tremendous increase in the number and amount of gifts to the denomination to further its work, much of the income from which was expended to launch new churches and aid faltering ones. The second was a realistic — some would say overly severe — attempt to close Unitarian societies which could not maintain themselves. During the first quarter of the present century no less than seventy newly-organized churches lapsed.⁸ An even more dramatic fact is that, of the 371 churches aided by the A.U.A. between 1890 and 1934, no less than 204, or 55%, lapsed.⁹ This situation reflects the practice of church extension by travelling missionaries, a far more expensive method than the device of self-initiating and self-sustaining Unitarian fellowships, a program begun in 1948 under which the mortality rate of new societies has been less than one in ten.¹⁰ Whatever Dr. Eliot achieved during his administration he did not discover the secret of effective church extension.¹¹

A final note of Dr. Eliot's years. It was near the end of his administration that the A.U.A. undertook its first comprehensive self-evaluation. This occurred between 1921 and 1925 under the aegis of the Commission on Polity. The chief results of this effort were the legal assimilation of the General Conference (formerly the National Conference) of Unitarian Churches into the A.U.A. structure, the strengthening of the delegate system of representation, an attempt at establishment of regional conferences, and the enlargement of the headquarters staff.¹²

Dr. Eliot retired from the presidency in 1927, assuming the pulpit of the Arlington Street Church in Boston for eight years until succeeded by

the young Dana McLean Greeley, now president of the Unitarian Universalist Association. "Dr. Sam," full of years, wisdom, and honors, died 15 October 1950 in his eighty-ninth year.

In 1927 Dr. Louis Craig Cornish, Episcopal-born, long-time minister of the Old Ship Church in Hingham, Mass., and for twelve years (1915-1927) secretary-at-large, assumed the presidency of the A.U.A. A smallish, kindly man, pastoral, unassuming, and idealistic, it was Dr. Cornish's ill fortune to assume the leadership of the denomination shortly before the coming of the Great Depression. The economic collapse not only accelerated the failure of marginal churches, it tragically undercut the fiscal strength of established churches, to the distress of Dr. Cornish and many others who had believed that at least the latter could ride out the storm.¹³ Something of the quality of Dr. Cornish's leadership may be found in his annual report of 1929 to the churches, in which he said, "I believe with all my heart in the work we are doing. It is varied, effective, and worthwhile. These tasks to which we are committed absorb so much of our means and thought that there is really no room for very much that is new."¹⁴ "No room for very much that is new" — perhaps Dr. Cornish is to be compared to President Herbert Hoover, who, for all of his brilliance and past achievements, was unable to innovate in response to the monstrous fact of Depression.

The most conspicuous results the Cornish years were first, an intensification of the international work of the Association, to be discussed below, and secondly, the appointment of a Commission of Appraisal, which undertook the second comprehensive scrutiny of the denomination's work in this century. The report of this Commission, from which I have already quoted, is unquestionably the most important institutional study of American Unitarianism produced in two centuries of our existence on these shores. Entitled *Unitarians Face a New Age*, it is required reading for all who wish to understand the dynamics of our organizational growth in the twentieth century. The brief excerpt contained in *The Epic Of Unitarianism* provides only a glimpse of the breadth and richness of its pages. Unfortunately the volume is out of print and copies are extremely difficult to locate, except in libraries.

Why was this report significant? First, because it was undertaken in response to the felt needs of the churches. It grew out of the dissatisfaction of ministers and laymen with the existing measures for dealing with the effects of the Depression upon the churches, and was conceived of as a "recovery program" for the re-establishment of morale and momentum within the denomination.¹⁵ It was important, secondly, because the

Commission of Appraisal, which prepared it, was *independent of denominational control*. Its chairman was not the A.U.A. president but a respected Midwest minister, and although its appointment had been welcomed by Dr. Cornish,¹⁶ the Commission had sharp words for his administration, most notably the following:

...the mind of the denomination is not at present adequately represented by all of the executive officers of the American Unitarian Association, and until there is either a change of mind on the part of those officials who are opposed to the general philosophy which the present report sets forth, or some changes in the official personnel of the Association, there can be no hope for substantial progress in the desired direction.¹⁷

The report was significant, thirdly, because it was *the work of experts*. Only eight in number, the commission's membership included two ministers, three professors, two college presidents, and the dean of American publishers. In addition, a full-time research staff of two served the commission for a period of ten months, producing an extraordinarily valuable statistical and interpretive report which is included as an integral part of the commission's findings.¹⁸ The report was significant, finally, because its recommendations were *presented in form that could be acted upon* by the churches in assembly, and in fact its recommendations were adopted virtually without exception or amendment by the A.U.A. annual meeting in 1937. These included the further centralization of leadership in the president of the Association, the decentralization of administrative functions in headquarters departments and semi-autonomous geographical regions, the re-organization of the Board of Directors to render it more representative of the churches and auxiliary organizations and less dependent upon paid members of the staff, more modern fund-raising practices and fiscal policies, and a greater emphasis upon religious education and student work.¹⁹

Dr. Cornish, who had made increased ministerial pensions a special project throughout his career, stepped down from the presidency in May 1937, having announced his intention to do so the previous October. He died in retirement in Florida 6 January 1950.

So well had the Commission of Appraisal done its work that when the need arose for a successor to Louis Cornish (speculation had begun long before the latter announced his decision to retire), the name of the Commission chairman, the Rev. Dr. Frederick May Eliot, minister of Unity Church in St. Paul, Minn., was immediately put forward. Recalling that three years had elapsed from the time of the Commission's establishment

in May 1934 until the adoption of its report, it can be seen that there was ample time for the denomination to consider Dr. Eliot and vice versa. At first reluctant to leave the parish ministry, he at length consented to stand for the office of president. Dr. Eliot's candidacy was based on a widespread conviction in the churches that he was the logical person to lead the denomination into its "new age." Largely through a misunderstanding of his position,²⁰ a number of theologically more conservative persons opposed his candidacy and persuaded Dr. Charles R. Joy, administrative vice president of the Association under Comish, to run against Dr. Eliot on a platform that was theistic and critical of the Commission of Appraisal. However, Dr. Joy withdrew before the annual meeting and Dr. Eliot was elected in an atmosphere of rising morale and great expectations.

I have summarized elsewhere the spirit and accomplishments of the Frederick May Eliot years.²¹ So recently did Dr. Eliot labor among us that many still recall him — erect, austere, indomitable, his rich voice adding authority to the decisions of his manifestly political nature. Born in Dorchester, Mass. in 1889, he was graduated from Roxbury Latin School (1907) and Harvard College (1911), and considered a career in government before enrolling, at the prompting of the famous Dr. Crothers, at the Harvard Divinity School. He graduated in 1915 and became Dr. Crothers' assistant at the First Parish in Cambridge. In 1917 he accepted a call to Unity Church in St. Paul, whose pulpit he filled with great distinction for two decades (including a sojourn as military chaplain in France in World War One) until his election as president of the A.U.A.

Dr. Eliot was a virile and comprehensive leader to the denomination for twenty-one years from 1937 until his death in New York City 17 February 1958. Among the achievements of the denomination during his administration were: the development of the New Beacon Series in Religious Education, whose antecedents are discussed below; the Unitarian fellowships program;²² the consolidation of the Unitarian and Universalist denominations, which he favored and encouraged; the program of "Unitarian advance," initiated in the Washington area by Dr. A. Powell Davies, resulting in a system of satellite churches surrounding a parent church in many of the major cities of North America; the development of the Unitarian Service Committee into an influential agency of domestic and international humanitarian service, and the upgrading of denominational morale, ministerial salaries, and theological education.

One of Dr. Eliot's great strengths as leader of the denomination was his power to discern and articulate the creative possibilities of liberal religion. He was author, hymn-writer, preacher, and advocate to the churches

for forty years. In 1946, in an essay entitled "After Four Centuries — New Perspectives," he gave voice to "certain points of tension /visible within the Unitarian fellowship/ that reveal the nature of the present conflicts and indicate the direction in which the next steps will take us forward."²³

The first was "the impulse to think in world terms," of which he wrote:

It is the historic role of Unitarianism to serve as the interpreter of a liberal and spiritual Christianity — free of doctrinal and ecclesiastical imperialism — to the other high religions of the world; in this, Unitarianism is the servant of Christianity as well as of mankind, even though it be repudiated by Christendom in the process.²⁴

The second was "the effort to bring about an adjustment between religion and political, social and economic needs of the modern world," of which he wrote:

If Unitarianism can provide the combination of courage and wisdom that will enable thoughtful men to tackle the vast social problems of our day with competence and idealism, it will have fulfilled a large part of its destiny and proved itself worthy of its inheritance. This is our vocation as Unitarians now.²⁵

The third was the need for "a positive and constructive philosophy of liberty" which, he said, "calls for intellectual leadership of a kind that Unitarians have not possessed for nearly a hundred years."²⁶ He warned, however, that

Forces are at work in our world, both in America and abroad, that seek to destroy the liberties...for which liberals long have fought; and these subversive forces assume many different disguises and labels. All along the line, from Fascism to Communism, from extreme right to extreme left, and frequently concealed within groups that bear familiar and honored designations, the dark powers that seek to destroy human freedom are actively at work...Liberals need a program of bold action, to counteract this peril, wherever it appears...²⁷

It was characteristic of Dr. Eliot that what he preached he practiced to the limit of his powers, and his work for interfaith understanding, human rights, and democratic liberalism was second to none in the denomination.

Estimates vary as to the long-range importance of Dr. Eliot's contribution. To some, his effort to purge the denomination of left-wing elements

between 1944 and 1948, while faithfully preserving the liberties of those involved, ranks as his supreme achievement.²⁸ Others hold that his greatness consisted in striking a balance between the centripetal forces of national leadership (most conspicuously his own), and the centrifugal forces of regional, local, and lay initiative. Still others tend to hold Dr. Eliot responsible for the "deterioration" of American Unitarianism from a major American denomination in the classic tradition to an over-organized, anti-theological, unself-critical sect because, it is held, it was he who triggered the organizational advances which had the effect of turning men's attention, and the denomination's energies, from "spiritual" to "administrative" religion. There is probably an element of truth in each of these estimates.

It is too early to appraise the contribution of Dr. Dana McLean Greeley, who in 1958 succeeded Dr. Eliot in the presidency of the A.U.A., and who in 1961 was elected the first president of the Unitarian Universalist Association. In general it may be said that he has continued the expansionist philosophy of administration of both Drs. Eliot who preceded him, modified by a clearly defined staff system according to which department heads bear decisive responsibility for the operation of their departments. It was under Dr. Greeley's leadership that the third major self-evaluation of the liberal church in the twentieth century was undertaken by the study commissions on "the Free Church in a Changing World" (1960-1963).²⁹

II. A second epoch-making event of the year 1900 was the gathering in Boston, to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the American (and, incidentally, of the British and Foreign) Unitarian Association, of delegates from many countries to establish The International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers. A prefiguration of this meeting was the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893 in connection with the Columbian Exposition.³⁰ The difference between the two meetings lay in the fact that while the World Parliament included representatives of all of the world's great religions, the 1900 congress included representatives only of those of the free Protestant tradition.

There had been desultory contacts between American, British, and other far-flung liberal religious communities throughout the nineteenth century, consisting largely of exchanges of official greetings. The importance of the 1900 meeting was that it, for the first time, brought representatives of the various liberal communions face to face for discourse and common action. Convened at the suggestion of Dr. Samuel A. Eliot, the 1900 congress worshipped, heard reports from delegates, and organized itself "to open communication with those in all lands who are striving to

unite pure religion and perfect liberty, and to increase fellowship and cooperation among them." The first executive committee included representatives from the United States, Britain, Japan, Hungary, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, and Switzerland. The Rev. Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, the noted Biblical scholar and church historian, was elected first president.³¹

In the fifteen year period between the turn of the century and the outbreak of World War One, a total of seven international conferences were held: in Boston 1900, London 1901, Amsterdam 1903, Geneva 1905, Boston 1907, Cologne/Berlin 1910, and Paris 1913. At the Boston meeting of 1907, a total of 2,400 delegates attended from sixteen nations and 93 separate religious associations.³² The records of these meetings were published in large, expensive volumes, many of them edited by the Rev. Dr. Charles W. Wendte, an American Unitarian minister who served as a kind of secretary general of the world bodies of religious liberals through the first quarter of this century.³³

The participants believed themselves to be engaged in momentous work of education, protest, and mutual aid. For example, at the 1907 Boston congress papers were read outlining the restrictions upon religious liberty in Germany and Austria, particularly upon freedom of theological dissent in the strongly Catholic and Lutheran territories.³⁴ The delegates took comfort, in the face of such oppressions, in statements such as that of the Hungarian patriot Louis Kossuth, who once said that "Unitarianism is the only faith which has a future; the only one that can influence the intelligent and interest the indifferent."³⁵

These international meetings were basically ceremonial in nature until issues arose to galvanize into action the tremendous latent energy of the world's religious liberals. The first such issue was the mistreatment of the religious minorities of Transylvania, the ancient Carpathian kingdom where Unitarianism had first emerged to history in mid-sixteenth century. Following World War One Transylvania, historically a part of Hungary, was ceded to Romania. The Romanian government proceeded to deny basic liberties to the Transylvanians, regarding the country, according to one account, as "a conquered territory."³⁶ Confiscation of schools and churches, commandeering of dwellings, restrictions on the right of public worship and public assembly were widespread.³⁷ In response, a series of visitations, chiefly from English and American Unitarians, and the formation of an English and later an American Committee on Religious Rights and Minorities, served to call the world's attention to the conditions in Transylvania, and, in Louis Comish's words, to "stay the hand of

ruthlessness and to give these minority institutions a better fighting chance for functioning and for surviving.”³⁸

A second such issue was the effort to establish a Unitarian movement in Czechoslovakia. With the establishment in 1918 of the Republic of Czechoslovakia out of the old Austro-Hungarian kingdoms of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Slovakia, more than a million Roman Catholics left the Church. Seeking an indigenous church home, they formed the Czechoslovak Church – often misnamed the “national church” – which was episcopal in polity and orthodox in liturgy but liberal in theology. Through the International Council and its member churches, a friendly hand was extended to the Czechoslovak Church, leading, for example, to the conferring of the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity upon Patriarch Prochazka by the Meadville Theological School at a special convocation in Prague in 1934. In addition, by virtue of the loyalty to Unitarianism of the wife of the president of the Czechoslovak Republic, Mrs. Thomas G. Masaryk, efforts were launched to establish an avowedly Unitarian church in the Bohemian capital. In 1921 Dr. and Mrs. Norbert Capek were sent to Prague for this purpose. Starting from scratch, the Capeks succeeded in forming the largest Unitarian congregation in the world, numbering 3,395 in 1932.³⁹ Norbert Capek was murdered by the Nazis at Dachau in November 1942.⁴⁰ His widow resided in California until her death in 1966.

A third occasion for more-than-fraternal activity came in 1928 when a chance remark brought to the attention of the American Unitarian leaders the Independent Church of the Philippines, formed in 1905 by the withdrawal of several million persons from the Roman Catholic church at the time of Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War and the consequent cession of the islands to the United States. Briefly stated, there was a liaison of about a decade between the American Unitarians and the Independent Church, during which period Louis Cornish and others were convinced that the latter, now affiliated with the International Council, would become Unitarian. Cornish was made Honorary President of the Independent Church, an office previously held by the Unitarian William Howard Taft when American Commissioner to the Philippines prior to his election as president of the United States.⁴¹ But the Independent Church, which Cornish described as “nothing less than the Philippine Protestant Reformation long delayed by Spanish tyranny,”⁴² finally elected to affiliate with the Episcopal rather than the Unitarian churches, the Anglican liturgy and doctrine being more in keeping with the new communion's Catholic antecedents.⁴³

An odd sidelight to the history of international Unitarianism is told by Dr. Cornish:

In a broadcast to the United States, in the winter of 1933, Senor Mussolini made a statement to the effect that the United States was great to him because it had produced three religious teachers, William Ellery Channing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and William James. In recognition of this speech the President of the Association [Dr. Cornish] wrote a letter of thanks to Mussolini and begged him to accept a specially bound and inscribed copy of Channing's great sermon on Liberty, which in due time was courteously acknowledged.⁴⁴

The International Council was reorganized in 1930 in its present name and structure, the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom, with headquarters at The Hague. It continues to be, in Samuel Eliot's phrase, "the evidence and agency of a world-wide religious liberalism,"⁴⁵ and to command the respectful participation of the world's religious liberals.

III. A third phase of recent Unitarian history is the social application of religion, symbolized by Professor Peabody's path-breaking volume, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*. Needless to say Peabody (1847-1936) was not the first Unitarian to apply the ethics of Jesus to contemporary social problems; this had been a driving concern of generations of Unitarians in Europe and America who were in the forefront of social reform. What Peabody did was to render ethics relevant to the education of college and university students, and in the process to systematize it into a coherent academic discipline. His course at Harvard entitled "Ethical Theories and Social Problems: a practical examination of the questions of charity, temperance, labor, prisons, divorce, etc." came inevitably to be known among the students as "Peabo's drainage, drunkenness and divorce."⁴⁶

Peabody's ethical teaching, begun at Harvard in 1881, was based on the premise that ethics was an inductive science rooted in the human experience of evil and its consequences no less than a deductive science rooted in eternal moral laws: unless eternal principles found application in particular human situations, they were mere intellectual postulates and fell short of meeting the test of reality in religion. Peabody, undertaking the dual task of analyzing ethical theories and human problems, became one of the foremost ethics scholars in the Western world, and a significant contributor to the newly-developing social service professions. Although "teachers of the older academic disciplines sometimes looked askance on the new subject as something not quite within the range of scholarship," Peabody made ethics respectable, both in the churches and in the universities, and it was in recognition of his achievement that he was in 1905

appointed the first exchange professor from the United States at the University of Berlin.⁴⁷

The turn of the century was a crowded moment of reform in America. The social gospel was its theology; Peabody its theoretician; Teddy Roosevelt its agitator; William James its philosopher; the muckrakers its chroniclers; and the world its oyster. The doctrine of evolution, according to which, in John Fiske's words, "The most essential feature of Man is his improveableness,"⁴⁸ led inexorably to the conclusion that the proportion of good and evil in the world was steadily changing in favor of the former. Evil, in the evolutionary view,

...is a fact not to be explained away, but to be accepted; and accepted not to be endured, but to be conquered. It is a challenge neither to our reason nor to our patience, but to our courage. For the first time we discover that evil is real and yet not necessary, a phenomenon fortuitous and transient. Some day...evil will be overcome. The future is certain to be delivered of all ill; and in an evolving world it is the future which is alone important.⁴⁹

Out of such convictions was born the social movement in American Protestantism, in which all of the major denominations participated through the establishment of social service programs (the term "social action" is now customary among Unitarian Universalists), and from which the Federal (now National) Council of Churches was formed in 1908 largely for the purpose of co-ordinating these very programs.⁵⁰

It was into the maelstrom of urban America in the heyday of the social gospel that a young Unitarian graduate of the Harvard Divinity School was thrust in May 1904 when ordained and installed in the Third Religious Society of Dorchester, Mass. The young man was to become the foremost social prophet of modern Unitarianism—the incomparable John Haynes Holmes. In his autobiography Holmes recalls how the social question dawned upon him in his first church:

I was content /to be an evolutionist/...content, at least, until there came into the field, during my years in Dorchester (1904–1907), another issue which created turmoil in my mind as it was creating consternation in the public mind! This new issue was that of the church and the social question. Should the church concern itself with the injustices and iniquities of the times?...In my case, the way seemed clear. Within me, as a spiritual heritage, settled a prophetic passion for righteousness. My whole being stood instantly awake in the presence of oppression.⁵¹

The lights which illumined the young Holmes's pilgrimage to righteousness were those of Theodore Parker, Henry George, and Walter Rauschenbusch.

Holmes's acquaintance with Peabody at Harvard seems to have influenced his preaching style more than his ethical sensitivity.⁵²

It is impossible to summarize adequately the prophetic career of John Haynes Holmes; it was too rich, and deep, and wide for synopsis, and he has himself given it voice in a magnificent autobiography. The heart of Holmes's message was the integrity of personality, and his crucial mission, peace. His denunciations of war in 1915 rank with the finest human utterances of this century:

War is never justifiable at any time or under any circumstances. No man is wise enough, no nation is important enough, no human interest is precious enough, to justify the wholesale destruction and murder which constitute the science of war.... War is hate, and hate has no place within the human heart. War is death, and death has no place within the realm of life. War is hell, and hell has no more place in the human order than in the divine.

This war he added is wrong. Its prosecution would be a crime. There is not a question raised, an issue involved, a cause at stake, which is worth the life of one blue-jacket on the sea or one khaki coat in the trenches. I say to you that when, years hence, the whole of this study has been told, it will be found that we have been tragically deceived, and all our sacrifices have been made in vain.⁵³

In both world wars Holmes refused to countenance armed conflict as a solution to human problems, and in both wars his congregation honored his commitment.

Holmes was involved in the founding of many of the most influential reform groups in modern American history, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1909), the American Civil Liberties union (1920), and the American branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (1915). He was a Socialist in politics because his principles resonated with those of the Socialist party and besides, as he adds, Norman Thomas needed a strong voice in New York City. He helped organize the movement which drove from office the notorious Mayor Jimmy Walker of New York. He was a founder in 1908 of the Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice.⁵⁴

A third figure who illustrates the liberal religious ethical thrust is Professor James Luther Adams, a successor to Francis G. Peabody in the chair of social ethics at Harvard, and an influential Unitarian Universalist theologian of mid-twentieth century. (It may be added that Dr. Adams served as a member of the Commission of Appraisal 1934-1937.) Dr. Adams, the literature by and about whom increases by the month, illustrates both the strengths and the weaknesses of the Unitarian Univer-

salist posture in social matters. Its strengths are an aroused conscience, a profound sense of Divine righteousness (Holmes speaks of pacifism as as "the high counsel of God"),⁵⁵ and an insistence upon organization as the means of social betterment (Adams speaks of the "community-forming power of God" working in voluntary associations, and amends the admonition of Jesus to read, "By their *groups* shall ye know them").⁵⁶ Its weaknesses, if one may so speak without being misunderstood, include an unintended but unmistakable aloofness from the grit and grime of participation (perhaps one could not unfairly use the term "white collar reform"), a tendency to equate words with action, as if indignant resolutions passed at General Assembly meetings ("with copies sent to the President, Vice President, and members of the Senate and Congress, and to their counterparts in Canada") constituted a sufficient protest against wrong-doing, and an ambiguous attitude toward the relationship between theology and human action. Holmes, for his part, tended to minimize the importance of theology in the prophetic life,⁵⁷ while Adams tends to emphasize it to such a degree that every human grouping is regarded as an agency of "God's righteous purpose."⁵⁸

Many responses as to the ethical imperative have been devised by the religious liberals of America. Individual and congregational action is widespread and impressive. In addition, the Fellowship of Social Justice (now Unitarian-Universalist) sponsors an annual Workshop in Washington in March at which experts both in and out of government address the delegates on questions of social concern. In 1963 a Commission on Religion and Race was appointed by the Unitarian Universalist Association to co-ordinate the efforts of Unitarians and Universalists in this sphere -- by providing leadership in public demonstrations such as the historic March on Washington in August 1963, and the Selma demonstrations of March 1965, for example, and by receiving monies to be used for bail, legal fees, and so forth. Another device was that adopted for a time by the First Unitarian Congregational Society of Rochester, New York, under the leadership of the Rev. Robert West, according to which the congregation was divided on a voluntary basis into social action task teams, each dealing with a particular social concern such as advertising, arts and recreation, employment, housing, education, and human relations.⁵⁹ A new department of Social Responsibility was created by the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1964 to coordinate the denomination's efforts. Dr. Homer A. Jack is its director.

IV. For a final insight into the recent history of American Unitarianism, we turn to the development of the progressive approach to religious education. The Unitarians were not the first American denomination to think progressively about education, but they were among the first to incorporate the new insights into their curriculum materials.

1. The key to all progressive education, religious or otherwise, is the principle of *growth* according to which children are held to possess within themselves the capacity for happiness and creativity, rather than being born in sin and requiring some supernatural infusion of grace to redeem them therefrom. Three notable formulations of the concept of growth were those of William Ellery Channing, the great Boston Unitarian, Horace Bushnell, a liberal Congregationalist from Hartford, and G. Stanley Hall, president of Clark University in Worcester, Mass.

Channing, in his address on "The Sunday School" in 1837, declared that the church must have faith not only in God, in Scripture, and in the school, but also in the child himself. The church must have faith in the child's nature, capacity for improvement, worth, ability to distinguish right from wrong, his power of "knowing and loving the good and the true."⁶⁰ "The great end in religious instruction," he wrote in a passage that has become a modern classic in our midst,

is, not to stamp our minds irresistibly on the young, but to stir up their
their own; not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly
and steadily with their own; not to give them a definite amount of know-
ledge, but to inspire a fervent love of truth; not to form an outward
regularity, but to touch inward springs . . .⁶¹

"As far as possible," Channing added, "religion should be adapted to their the children's minds and hearts. We should teach them religion as we do nature"—note he does *not* say we should teach religion *by teaching nature*; this was far from his intention -- and "I do not think that so much harm is done by giving error to a child as by giving truth in a lifeless form."⁶²

Horace Bushnell followed Channing by a generation. His contribution to the theology of growth was the principle of nurture, according to which the child grew religiously by assimilating the qualities of his parents in the family circle. Eschewing the notion that the children were saved only by being converted, Bushnell argued that "the child is to grow up a Christian and never know himself as being otherwise." The constructive -- or destructive -- influences of the home are, he declared, more compelling to the child than any "technical experience."⁶³ In a passage that will appeal

to all Unitarian Universalist parents Bushnell taught that "Play is the symbol and interpreter of liberty . . . the forerunner of religion,"⁶⁴ -- but again observe that he does not say that play is religion.

A third contribution to the concept of growth was that of Dr. G. Stanley Hall, an early American disciple of Freud, who gave to the concept scientific status and historical relevance in his theory of recapitulation according to which "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" -- the growing human organism passes through the phases of growth of primitive man, hence it is possible to understand individual growth cycles through the study of primitive civilizations past and present. This idea was to be of central importance to the religious education theory of Mrs. Sophia Lyon Fahs.

2. Given the principle of growth, what was required was a school in which the capacities of children could be released, observed, and celebrated. In the spirit of earlier educational experiments including those of Comenius, Pestalozzi, and Froebel, such a school was established at the University of Chicago by John Dewey in 1896 -- it continues to operate today as the Laboratory School. In contrast to what Dewey called the "old education" -- characterized by passivity of attitude, the mechanical massing of children, the uniformity of curriculum and method, the placing of the "center of gravity" of education outside the child,⁶⁵ Dewey argued that "the supreme end of the child is fulness of growth -- fulness of realization of his budding powers . . ."⁶⁶ and formulated a philosophy of education based upon the instincts or interest of children "in conversation, or communication; in inquiry, or finding out things; in making things, or construction; and in artistic expression" which he described as "the natural resources, the uninvested capital upon the exercise of which depends the active growth of the child."⁶⁷ Lamenting the gulf between school experiences and non-school experiences in the lives of children he knew, Dewey suggested that the school should be a "surrogate institution" in which the various functions of home and shop, past and present history, his own and other cultures would be integrated and vivified.⁶⁸ "The aim, then, is not for the child to go to school as a place apart, but rather in the school so to recapitulate phases of his experience outside school, as to enlarge, enrich, and gradually formulate it."⁶⁹ Dewey's philosophy of education has been summarized in the phrase "the reconstruction of experience" (to which may be compared Hall's concept of the recapitulation of racial experience in individual development, and Collingwood's concept of history as the re-enactment of past experience), a term which seems warranted by his statement that "What we want is to have the child come to school with a whole mind and whole body, and leave school with a fuller mind and an even healthier body."⁷⁰

Dewey's experiences at Chicago constituted the basis of his mature work at Columbia University, including Columbia University Teachers College, where he taught from 1904 until his retirement in 1930. Throughout this period, in ways both direct and indirect, he was to preside over the "progressivization" of American education, secular and religious, and profoundly to affect the thinking of those most responsible for the advances in Unitarian religious education.⁷¹

3. The decisive moment in progressive religious education came when the concept of growth was accepted by the churches as a theological principle, and when they realized that the methods and approaches of child-centered secular education (such as practiced at Dewey's Laboratory School and similar institutions) could be incorporated into religious instruction. That moment, as I have indicated, symbolically arrived in the year 1900, finding voice in the annual report of the president of the Unitarian Sunday School Society, the Rev. Edward A. Horton.

The old-fashioned manuals [he wrote] will pass away. Catechisms will be [subordinated] to other and better methods. The great laws of teaching now finding greater sway will take possession of the Sunday School . . . Growth . . . will be the motto of Sunday School.⁷²

So much for the principle of growth -- it was to become the touchstone of religious education. As for methodology, Dr. Horton asked

How can we describe the altered methods appropriate to the Sunday School? In brief, to use those which have been found helpful in public schools, so far as they are applicable. Teaching is teaching, whether in the every-day school or in the Sunday School class. True, there is difference in the matter; but the system is substantially the same.⁷³

The revolution was complete. All that was now required was for the "difference in matter" to be clarified, and for the educator to be found who could spell out -- in a philosophy, in children's books, and in teachers' materials -- the implications of the revolution.

After a valiant but short-lived curriculum experiment in 1909, the Unitarian denomination believed it had found such an educator when Dr. Edwin D. Starbuck, a Quaker, professor of philosophy at Iowa State University, and famed as author of the *Psychology of Religion* (1899), was appointed Consulting Editor in a new Department of Religious Education in the year 1912. For two years Dr. Starbuck labored to develop a curriculum that would meet the particular needs of the liberal churches. The unique feature of the proposed new curriculum, in conformity to the thinking of the larger Protestant community, was a sequence of graded texts beginning at the four-year level and continuing through the twenty-first year.

It was believed that the graded curriculum embodied the principle of growth while according with "present-day ideas on pedagogy and psychology."⁷⁴ Unfortunately, however, the concept of a graded curriculum introduced an unforeseen and unwanted element of rigidity into the plan that modified the intention of its creators. Unfortunately also, Dr. Starbuck resigned his position in the early stages of the task of curriculum development so that other less experienced hands carried it to completion. This curriculum, the Beacon Course in Religious Education, was as progressive as its creators knew how to make it, and in spite of its deficiencies it served the denomination well, and was a model for several other denominational curricula beyond the liberal church, from 1912 until the mid-1930's.

It was not until 1937 that the Unitarians found the educator they had been looking for since 1900 -- in the person of Mrs. Sophia Lyon Fahs. Her appointment as Editor of Children's Materials in the Department of Education of the American Unitarian Association heralded a new age of progressive religious education for the churches, an age in which we today, insofar as her insights continue to inform our thinking, still live.

I have quoted Dr. Horton's report of 1900 in which he said, with reference to religious and secular education, that "there is a difference in matter; but the system /i.e. the method/ is substantially the same." What, it may be asked, is the difference in subject matter between the weekday and the Sunday School, if any? Mrs. Fahs asked the same question, and we begin to understand her philosophy of education by tracing out her answer.

Born in China of Presbyterian missionary parents, Sophia Fahs returned to the United States with her parents when still a girl, to attend the College of Wooster in Ohio. She was an evangelical Christian, active in the Student Volunteer Movement, and committed to a missionary career of her own. However a series of events during her college years led her to doubt some of the orthodox Christian beliefs of her childhood, and she began to think about religion in a new way. In pursuit of religious guidance she enrolled in 1901 at the University of Chicago Divinity School, there to embrace the critical method of Biblical studies, and later took a Master's degree at Teachers College, Columbia University. It will be noted that, in contrast to the relative orthodoxy of Wooster, Presbyterian like her family, Chicago and Columbia were world centers of theological and educational liberalism. It was in a liberal direction that young Sophia moved.

While studying at Teachers College, Sophia applied for and received

a teaching position at the Sunday School at Teachers College, a small, unofficial, progressive school conducted chiefly for faculty children. Instead of the Bible, she was asked to teach her class the life of John G. Paton, a foreign missionary. "Again," as she wrote later, "a chain was broken that bound me to a traditional way. I was able to face the question, What use should be made of Biblical material in Sunday School, without fear of losing values that I cherished. No longer could I ever justify using Biblical material simply because it was Biblical."⁷⁵

But a deeper question persisted: "What subject matter is best adapted to aid in the religious growth of children?" Sophia considered and abandoned the so-called "life situation" approach as "not necessarily interesting" to children. "We discovered," she wrote, that children

often felt after such discussions that they were not learning anything . . . For to discuss one's immediate problems without any wisdom garnered from the centuries of human experience is a rather shallow way of doing. Such discussions became little more than the heated exchange of prejudiced opinions.⁷⁶

The alternative seemed to be the Bible. But, as she wrote, the Bible "is not a children's book."⁷⁷ Where should she turn for the subject matter of a religion suited to children?

The answer is contained in her own words:

It seems to me that the stories of the people represented in certain parts of the Bible are well worthwhile sharing with boys and girls -- at the proper ages -- when they are old enough to appreciate these men and women and to recognize a kinship with them. And these stories of the past should be given vividly, dramatically and as fully as the records will permit us to do and still be true to what careful study leads us to regard as historical at least in its general spirit and outline. Although it is harder to make Moses and Jesus come to life as real persons . . . than it is to make Jane Addams or Abraham Lincoln live, yet it is possible, provided we as teachers will pay the price in study . . . And if such stories are told at all, the story teller should be true not to the narrative as it is in the Bible but to the historical truth about the man which the Bible narrative may have distorted in order to teach some outworn theological or ethical proposition.

If the past is dealt with thus realistically, and truthfully and imaginatively with enough concrete detail so that the people told about are warmly alive, then boys and girls will probably find that there are problems difficult and vital to them today with which men two and three thousand years ago struggled also. Although the present day solutions may be different from those of long ago, the boys and girls will have their own understandings and sympathies enlarged by knowing that a bond binds us to people of ancient times.⁷⁸

With such understandings as these -- of an approach to religious education which, beginning with the needs and interests of children, employs historical criticism and historical imagination as its method and draws upon Biblical and extra-Biblical sources and the study of comparative culture (mythic as well as historical) for its subject matter -- Mrs. Fahs began to create, by her own pen and in collaboration with others, the New Beacon Series in Religious Education. Under her aegis, a new curriculum text was produced on an average of every ten months for the next ten years: *Beginnings of Earth and Sky* in 1937, *Beginnings of Life and Death* in 1938 (they now appear in a single volume), *Child of the Sun* in 1939, *How Miracles Abound* and *Animal Babies* in 1941, *Moses* in 1942, *Jesus, the Carpenter's Son* in 1945, and so on. In 1940 appeared *Consider the Children: How They Grow* by Sophia Fahs and Mrs. Reginald Manwell of Syracuse, and in 1952 *Today's Children and Yesterday's Heritage*, the definitive theoretical work on the new curriculum. "Nor is the New Beacon Series completed," according to one source, "New books are even now in the making. In fact we hope the series will never be finished."⁷⁹

We may summarize the history of American Unitarianism since 1900 in three ways. First, organizationally, it represents the nationalization, or continentalization, or internationalization of the church -- away from a Boston, or Harvard, or even ■ New England worldview to an orientation to the farthest, most isolated religious liberal known to headquarters. In terms of values this has been accompanied by a process of secularization involving both the de-hallowing of historic religious forms and the re-definition of reality as nature, personality, or social interaction, nurturing respectively the religion and science, mental health, and group dynamics impulses in contemporary liberal religion. In terms of authority it has been accompanied by a process of laicization, the end result of which may well be the abandonment before the end of the present century of a formal ministry, and the substitution of what one wit has called, paraphrasing Martin Luther, the priesthood of unbelievers.

Secondly, ideologically, our recent history represents the conquest of traditional Christian thought forms by the idea of evolution, according to which the world, mankind, and each individual is growing progressively more perfect. The idea of evolution consciously or unconsciously constitutes the basis of our denominational life, our outreach, our ethics, and our education. It recently found expression in the words of Dr. Greeley when he wrote that "If we have faith in the future" -- the cardinal principle

of the evolutionary worldview -- "we must be convinced that our great heritage is insignificant in comparison with the role of liberal religion for tomorrow."⁸⁰

Thirdly, theologically, as a corollary of the organizational and ideological dimensions, our recent history is characterized by aimlessness. Organization and administrative activity has replaced theological discourse as the primary function of church leaders. No crucial theological controversy has engaged the denomination for thirty years. Theological inquiry is pursued by fewer and fewer of our churches; in the fellowships it is often viewed as an anachronism. If one were to identify the central theological emphasis of the denomination in 1967, it would be positivism, the philosophy of evidence popularized by Herbert Spencer late in the last century, an emphasis to which the current impulses of scientism, radical theology and linguistic philosophy may be viewed as kindred. Where the denomination is going with such views it is difficult to know. One is moved to sing with Whitman:

They go! they go! I know that they go, but I know not where they go
and, on reflection, to affirm

But I know that they go toward . . . something great.⁸¹

NOTES

1. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1900.
2. Edward A. Horton, "The Sunday School of To-morrow" annual report of the Unitarian Sunday School Society, 1900, p. 19.
3. Boston: Starr King Press, 1957, pp. 100-104; see also George W. Cooke, *Unitarianism in America* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1902), ch. VI.
4. Charles H. Lyttle, *Freedom Moves West* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), pp. 24-54.
5. Parke, *Epic*, pp. 121-122; see also Cooke, *Unitarianism*, pp. 187-197.
6. Cooke, *Unitarianism*, pp. 232-234.
7. An unpublished biography of Dr. Eliot has been prepared by his son, Dr. Charles W. Eliot.
8. Commission of Appraisal, *Unitarians Face a New Age* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1936), p. 222.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
10. Laile E. Bartlett, *Bright Galaxy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), pp. 203-204.

11. For a discussion of early twentieth century church extension practices see *Unitarians Face a New Age*, pp. 133-138.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 240-241.
13. Frances E. F. Cornish, *Louis Craig Cornish, Interpreter of Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1953), pp. 31-34; for evidence of the Depression's effect on local church finances see *Unitarians Face a New Age*, pp. 216-217.
14. F. E. F. Cornish, *Cornish*, p. 30; see also Louis Craig Cornish, *Work and Dreams and the Wide Horizon* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1937).
15. The resolution creating the Commission appears in *Unitarians Face a New Age*, pp. 323-324.
16. F. E. F. Cornish, *Cornish*, p. 34.
17. *Unitarians Face a New Age*, p. 25; for a clue as to the point of this statement, see *Unitarians Face a New Age*, p. 272.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 143-320. The Commission's director of studies was Dr. H. Paul Douglass, a pioneer in religious research. His volume *1000 City Churches: Phases of Adaption to Urban Environment* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1926) was published for the Institute of Social and Religious Research of New York City.
19. *Unitarians Face a New Age*, pp. 332-342.
20. Because Dr. Eliot had contributed a sermon, "Humanism and the Inner Life," to Curtis W. Reese's *Humanist Sermons* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1927), some regarded him as sympathetic to the humanist position. The controversy is detailed in Lyttle, *Freedom*, pp. 256-258, and in the Spring 1937 issues of the *Christian Register* in which the issues of the election were articulated.
21. "Our Thrust in History: American Unitarianism Since 1937," (Boston: Department of Publications, Unitarian Universalist Association, 1962). See also Lawrence G. Brooks, "Frederick May Eliot as I Knew Him," *The Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society*, Vol. XIII, Part I (1960), 87-100, and Alfred P. Stiernotte, ed., *Frederick May Eliot: An Anthology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959).
22. See Bartlett, *Bright Galaxy*.
23. Stephen H. Fritchman, ed., *Together We Advance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1946), p. 173.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.
28. See Ralph Lord Roy, *Communism and the Churches* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1960), ch. 19.
29. Dana McLean Greeley et al., *The Free Church in a Changing World, The Reports of the Commissions to the Churches and Fellowships of the Unitarian Universalist Association* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1963).
30. For a discussion of the World Parliament of Religions in its relationship to free religion, see Stow Pearsons, *Free Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), pp. 151, 154. The Parliament proceedings are contained in *The World Parliament of Religions* in two volumes (Chicago: Parliament Publishing Co., 1893).

31. Cooke, *Unitarianism*, pp. 245-246.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
33. See Charles W. Wendte, *The Wider Fellowship*, an autobiography in two volumes (Boston: Beacon Press, 1927).
34. C. W. Wendte, ed., *Freedom and Fellowship in Religion, Proceedings and Papers of the Fourth International Congress of Religious Liberals* (Boston: International Council, 1907), pp. 100-114, 142-152.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
36. L. C. Cornish, ed., *Transylvania in 1922* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1923), p. 1; see also L. C. Cornish, ed., *The Religious Minorities in Transylvania* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1925).
37. L. C. Cornish, *Transylvania*, ch. 1; see also L. C. Cornish, *Work and Dreams*, pp. 311-312 and F. E. F. Cornish, *Cornish*, pp. 60-62.
38. F. E. F. Cornish, *Cornish*, p. 59; see also L. C. Cornish, *Work and Dreams*, p. 312.
39. F. E. F. Cornish, *Cornish*, pp. 55-57; see also L. C. Cornish, *Work and Dreams*, pp. 349-352.
40. For Capek see S. A. Eliot, ed., *Heralds of a Liberal Faith*, Vol. IV, "The Pilots" (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), pp. 72-75.
41. F. E. F. Cornish, *Cornish*, p. 80.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 85; see also L. C. Cornish, *Work and Dreams*, pp. 355-397 and L. C. Cornish, *The Philippines Calling* (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Co., 1942). Another perspective is that of Norman S. Binsted, "The Philippine Independent Church," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, XXVII (1958), 209-246.
44. L. C. Cornish, *Work and Dreams*, p. 308.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 314-315.
46. S. A. Eliot, *Heralds*, IV, 199.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 199, 197. Recent studies include Jurgen Herbst, "Francis Greenwood Peabody: Harvard's Theologian of the Social Gospel," *Harvard Theological Review*, LIV (1961), 45-69 and Barton J. Bernstein, "Francis Greenwood Peabody: Conservative Social Reformer," *New England Quarterly* XXXVI (1963), 320-337. For a bibliography of Peabody's writings see Jurgen Herbst, "Francis Greenwood Peabody: A Bibliography," *The Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society*, Vol. XIII, Part II (1961), 86-97.
48. John Fiske, *The Destiny of Man* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1893), p. 71.
49. John Haynes Holmes, "A Struggling God," in Joseph Fort Newton, ed., *My Idea of God* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1927), p. 119.
50. For a brief summary of the impact of the social gospel movement upon American Protestantism see James Hastings Nichols, *History of Christianity 1650-1950* (New York: Ronald Press, 1956), pp. 279-282.
51. John Haynes Holmes, *I Speak for Myself, The Autobiography of John Haynes Holmes* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 76-77.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-81, 47.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.
54. *Ibid.*, ch. 14, pp. 167-169, 112, 214-215, 215-219, 256.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
56. James Luther Adams, *Taking Time Seriously* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1956), pp. 56, 67, 72, 52.
57. Holmes, *I Speak*, pp. 50, 118.
58. Adams, *Taking Time Seriously*, p. 52. A recent contribution to the study of groups is D. B. Robertson, ed., *Voluntary Associations, A Study of Groups in Free Societies* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966), a *festschrift* to Adams. For an analysis of the problem of evil from a liberal religious perspective, see the author's "The Sacred Limits," a sermon delivered at the Unitarian Church of Germantown 17 October 1965 and available from the church.
59. "Social Action Task Teams News Letter," First Unitarian Church, Rochester, N.Y., Vol. 1, No. 1 (April, 1964).
60. William Ellery Channing, *Works* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1903), pp. 447-448. This section is based upon research in connection with the author's doctoral dissertation, "The Historical and Religious Antecedents of the New Beacon Series in Religious Education (1937)," Boston University Graduate School, 1965.
61. Channing, p. 449.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 449-450.
63. Horace Bushnell, *Christian Nurture* (New York: 1876), p. 10.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 340.
65. John Dewey, *The School and Society*, in *The Child and the Curriculum and The School and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 34.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 14, 20.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
71. For a discussion of Dewey's impact upon American education, see Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961). As for Dewey's influence upon liberal religious educators, he was one of many pioneer thinkers who helped create the climate of ideas out of which the new curriculum emerged. Mrs. Fahs has said that "The first one who woke me up was Frank McMurry, professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, and principal of the Sunday School at Teachers College. He woke me up to John Dewey. In actual thought John Dewey was more important than McMurry; McMurry gave me the personal relationship that made Dewey's ideas live." Quotation from personal interview, June 1962. The late Mrs. Reginald Manwell, an associate of Mrs. Fahs in the development of the New Beacon Series in Religious Education, declared that "I could not have written my section of *Consider the Children* if I had not been influenced by Dewey during the 1920's, especially his emphasis on the dignity of the child." Quotation from personal conversation, June 1964. For additional insight into Mrs. Fahs's intellectual development see Edith F. Hunter, *Sophia Lyon Fahs: A Biography* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

72. E. A. Horton, "Sunday School," pp. 14-15.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
74. Typescript memorandum, "Why a New Course of Study is Necessary," 11 November 1913, A.U.A. files.
75. Sophia Lyon Fahs, "Certain Deeper Issues in Religious Education," ms. lecture given by Mrs. Fahs at Union Theological School c. 1929. Copy in author's papers.
76. *Ibid.*
77. Sophia Lyon Fahs, "Missionary Biography in the Sunday School," *The Biblical World*, XXXVII, 5 (May, 1906), 362. This is Mrs. Fahs' M.A. thesis at Columbia.
78. Fahs, "Certain Deeper Issues."
79. "The New Beacon Series in Religious Education" (Boston: Department of Education, Unitarian Universalist Association, 1962), p. 27.
80. Preface to *The Free Church in a Changing World*.
81. *Song of the Open Road*.

CONTESTS FOR THE PRESIDENCY

A.U.A., 1958 – U.U.A., 1961

By JOSEPH BARTH

Unitarian Universalist Association

The Editor has asked that I write of the political contest for the Presidency of the American Unitarian Association in 1958 and that for the same office of the new Unitarian Universalist Association three years later (the 1965 contest for the U.U.A. presidency is not discussed here). I have not been eager to do this now, since I am aware that no person yet has anything like a complete knowledge of the significant facts of either election and that leaving any out of an attempted "history" of those campaigns is to court merited criticism.

Very well. This is not a history; I have been persuaded to write for the record. The large body of facts I have I have tried to present fairly. Facts I do not have I welcome. The same goes for any informed and thoughtful criticism.

J.B.

The American Unitarian Association was founded on May 26, 1825.¹ In the Spring of 1958, one hundred and thirty-three years later, the first contested election for the office of president of the A.U.A. took place.

For at least the previous generation some Unitarian ministers and laymen had argued on principle that all elective offices in the A.U.A. should be won as a result of contest. The Board of Directors, which traditionally had nominated a single slate of officers, was regularly agitated to nominate more than one person for each elective office.

While no such contest had ever been arranged by the Board, the option of plural candidature was incorporated into the By-Laws of the Association. Accordingly it was *possible* for nominations for all offices to be made by petition from the Churches.

The By-Laws also provided that if the office of president should become vacant during a regular four-year term, nominations to fill the unexpired term *must* be made by petition. Both the A.U.A. Board and the churches and fellowships had a right to nominate by petition. Previous to the 1958 election, any contests for officers of the A.U.A. had been

instituted by petitions from the churches. While there had been no such contest for the office of the president, the possibility of a contest existed.

As long as Frederick May Eliot served as president no such contest was probable for the simple reason that, whatever else he was or was not, he was a giant of a man and well-established in office. Also, during the years of his incumbency the denomination had increased dramatically in vigor and numbers. "Who could win against him?" was a question ministers sometimes asked one another in a presidential election year. During his 21 years in office (1937-58) no possible opposition candidate found significant encouragement to try to answer that question. Indeed, whatever political interest there was in the denomination favoring a change in the office of president usually found expression, during Frederick Eliot's last two terms, in the question "After Frederick retires, who will take his place?" With his sudden death on February 17, 1958 the question became unexpectedly crucial.

In a communication dated February 20, the Secretary of the A.U.A. informed the churches and fellowships that

Following the sudden death of Dr. Frederick May Eliot, a special meeting of the Executive Committee was held on February 20, 1958. In addition to the Executive Committee, members of the Board of Directors who were available attended the meeting.

The Executive Committee voted to call a special meeting of the Board of Directors for March 4 and 5, at which meeting the principal item of business will be to consider candidates for the office of President to fill the vacancy by election at the Annual Meeting in May, 1958. The Board desires to have as many suggestions as possible. The Regional Directors are attending this special meeting of the Board, and suggestions should be sent to the Regional Directors or to the Secretary of the Association. (See Appendix 1.)

At that meeting the Executive Committee also appointed the Rev. Mason F. McGinness, who had been assistant to the president, to act as executive administrator of the Association until it was otherwise voted.

Aware that the annual meeting of the Association was only three months away, the Board of Directors was acting promptly in the critical situation to "consider candidates for the office of President." Mindful that the Association was an association of churches and fellowships, the Board invited suggestions from them for nomination. The regional directors - who were, at once, field men appointed by the Board to serve the Association in the regions and also elected officials of autonomous regional organizations - were also called into conference for the announced emergency nomination meetings set for March 4 and 5 less than

two weeks after the initial announcement.

That the churches and their ministers were shocked by Frederick Eliot's death and therefore relatively unprepared, in the two or three weeks immediately following, to make suggestions concerning a successor is clear from their response to the Board's appeal.

In a letter dated April 24, 1958 to "Ministers and Officials of Local Churches" over the signatures of the Revs. William W. Lewis and Arnold Crompton, the Secretary of the A.U.A. was quoted as follows:

The Executive Committee sent, on February 20, approximately 1250 letters to all Ministers, Clerks of Churches, and Chairmen of Fellowships announcing a special meeting of the Board and requesting suggestions for candidates for the office of President of the A.U.A. When the Board met on March 4, it had received 77 letters representing 35 names for consideration. In the light of the numbers and kinds of replies received, the Board considered this list only as suggestions and in no way a poll or survey of the entire denomination. All the names were brought to the attention of the Board, after which the Board chose 8 names for a more detailed consideration . . ."

From 1250 letters sent out only 77 replies received! These suggested 35 different names with but a possible 42 letters constituting evidence of the degree of popularity of any of the 35 persons mentioned in this hurried sampling. On the basis of these scanty returns the Board certainly had not been given, as some of its members might have hoped, a clear mandate for any one candidate.

On March 4 the regional directors met as a body and that evening considered their recommendations to the Board. Next day the Board proceeded to deal with the regional directors' report and select a nominee for the presidency. (See Appendix 2, March 7.)

Background Deliberations

It is an interesting psychological and religious question whether any office can or will kill any man unless he be willing to die for it. Whatever the answer, there were and are plenty of people who feel and say that the A.U.A. presidency killed Frederick Eliot. Certainly he gave his all to it in concern, in thoughtfulness and in time.

In honest loyalty to his memory and in consideration for any man chosen to take his place there was, among those selecting a nominee to be his successor, a real question concerning the nature of the office of the presidency of the A.U.A. With the growth of the denomination in numbers and geographic expanse, was the office, as traditionally con-

ceived, too demanding for any single person adequately to administer and still retain his health?

The critics and the criticisms of the 21-year presidency of Frederick Eliot were, we must suppose, in significant degree present in the deliberations to choose his successor. A capable man in any office for a long time has a tendency to build up around himself an aura of authority based on his own superior knowledge and his years of successful functioning. Even if he does not succumb to the tendency to "throw himself around," men who are otherwise his peers hesitate to criticise his policies openly. The inferior-feeling may charge "dictatorship" with a semblance of fact on their side. Underlings in office tend to be obsequious. Frederick Eliot was a capable president, and 21 years is an extraordinary tenure in such an office. Beyond that he had such a sturdy identification with the Unitarian denomination that he tended to react to criticisms of "the denomination" as if they were made of him personally.

He had his loyal admirers. He had his critics. Both could agree that the office of the presidency, with its possibly unlimited tenure which might "kill the man" or stifle criticism of his policies, needed study. Possibly the office needed to be reconstituted.

Finally, Frederick Eliot was a "strong president" who grew stronger in office. He did not wield his power in a vacuum. He did it in a denomination where he himself was first elected on the basis of a policy of decentralizing power by building up regions of power throughout the continent. He did increase these regions in number. He did see to it that they were allocated funds for operation, whether the regions raised their full quota in annual continental fund-raising drives or not, and most in their newness did not. He supported regionalism even when the A.U.A., in spite of regional efforts, was forced to use capital funds for its operation.

Frederick Eliot kept his campaign promise to decentralize power in the A.U.A. He never said that he would not be a strong president. He was one. A strong president who cultivates regional centers of power may be in an anomalous position. In such Dr. Eliot found himself.

The Western Conference² had been formed in 1852 as an autonomous regional body of Unitarian churches and had long been proud of its independence. In 1875 it had withdrawn support from the missionary program of the A.U.A. and, for nearly 20 years, virtually went its own way in matters financial and theological; not, of course, without strenuous opposition within the Conference itself. In Eliot's time, with churches

growing in strength all over the continent and needing the services of a regional organization and saying so in more and more insistent terms, the A.U.A. administration earnestly tried to answer the need. Under Eliot's guidance, regional conferences grew in number from the five listed in *Unitarians Face a New Age*, in 1936, to eight listed in the 1958-59 *Unitarian Yearbook*.

Not surprisingly, the growing power of the regions, cultivated from 25 Beacon Street, because manifested within the central agency itself.

Not long since, the Board of Directors had nominated its successors for office without consultation except, probably, with the president. Its nominees were almost automatically elected. But in the last generation, under increasing pressure from the regions evident at most Annual Meetings, the right to nominate for office had become shared by the Board with the churches and fellowships. There had been contested elections for seats on the Board. Most recently the regional directors had become authorized to nominate to the Nominating Committee the names of those to be considered for the Board. It was an unprecedented recognition of the growing power of the regional directors that they were invited by the Board to deliberate and recommend to the Board the names of individuals approved for the office of president left vacant by Dr. Eliot's death. In addition, they worked out a suggested policy for the Board to adopt during the subsequent three years.

It is not without interest (see Appendix 2) that the Board first approved the over-all policy devised by the regional directors and then nominated one of their recommended candidates. As stated in the excellent report of that meeting made to the churches and fellowships on March 7 by Lawrence G. Brooks, chairman of the Board:

Before any selection of a candidate was made, the duties of the office of the President were carefully reviewed and the Board members unanimously agreed that a study of the organization and functioning of the Association, including the relations of the Regions to the Association, should be undertaken immediately. Many of the Directors pointed out that the duties and obligations pertaining to the office of President had become too complex and that there should be a division and delegation of some of the responsibilities of the office. On the understanding that there would be such a study, the Board then spent the whole day considering all names that had been suggested.

The proposal for a "division and delegation of some of the responsibilities" of the office of president was rooted in one or several intentions. One intention, clearly, was to cut down the powers (not mentioned in the letter of March 7) and the responsibilities (which were mentioned) of any

new president of the A.U.A. Of course such a change would mean the continued growth in power of the regions in relation to the continental Association. Specifically it was suggested that the Board make the president its executive officer, by appointment, in the pattern of modern corporation practice and increase the duties of the Moderator, to be elected by the churches and fellowships, to include the ceremonial functions usually performed by the president. According to the proposal, the president, no longer elected by the member societies, would be a functionary of the Board and not empowered by denominational election to any status independent of the Board.

Finally, be it said in favor of the policy of studying "the organization and functioning of the Association" that, for years, it had been struggling with growing pains. Tensions were developing in theology, ritual practice, etc. between the long-established societies and the newly-organized churches and fellowships. The Unitarian tradition itself was threatened by the iconoclastic spirit of many new people coming into our denomination. The problems of providing space, educational philosophy and curriculum for the great influx of children into church schools were increasingly intense in more and more societies. Forces for organization on any and all levels of power strained against disorganization. A campaign for urgently needed capital funds was apparently unable to get off the ground. Merger with the Universalists was slowly coming to fruition, to the consternation of some, and the gratification of others, but as an unsettling development to almost everybody. Change, in which all believed, was ubiquitous; yet even to liberals it was disconcerting. People began to wonder about "roots" and "common purpose" and "direction." There was reason for self-study among Unitarians — perhaps even a new denominational study.

In greater or less degree all these factors entered into the thinking of the regional directors and the members of the Board as they deliberated concerning the nomination of a person to be elected president of the A.U.A. Out of the multiplicity of issues and from among many possible persons the Board had the responsibility of naming one man for the job as they saw it.

The Nominations

The Regional Directors recommended to us a list of eight men. The first three were recommended as especially qualified by training and experience for the office of President if the Board agreed with the Regional Directors that this three-year term for which we were nominating a

candidate should give primary emphasis to a redefinition of that office. Dr. Kuebler's name was among those three. (Appendix 4.)

Sharpening up the decision for or against the proposal of the regional directors that for "this three-year term," for which the board was to nominate a candidate, the denomination "should give primary emphasis to a redefinition of that office" (i.e., of president), the Board had before it a proposed resolution to change the By-Laws to redefine "that office." A "division and delegation" of the powers of the presidency was the heart of it. (Appendix 4.) Dr. Thaddeus Clark presented the resolution.

The suggested By-Law amendment failed of approval when it was pointed out that "some such provision . . . would be included in the recommendations of the Merger Commission which is to be presented to our churches sometime next autumn" The Board contented itself with the appointment of a "special committee to initiate this study and to make an interim report as soon as possible." (Appendix 4.)

Having decided on the policy of denominational study as a "primary emphasis" for the next three years and having appointed a special committee to initiate it, the Board acknowledged that "this general agreement . . . influenced its selection of a candidate, which now became the major item" of business.

The decision favoring "primary emphasis" on study and redefinition having been made as recommended by the regional directors, the Board deliberated concerning the qualifications of candidates, and nominations were now made. Among the candidates nominated were three within the Board itself, all of whom withdrew after the second ballot when it was determined that Dr. Ernest Kuebler had a majority of the Board's vote. "It was then moved that Dr. Kuebler should be nominated by petition on the initiative of the Board. This motion was passed unanimously"

The fact that there had been such a motion in the Board and that Ernest Kuebler was the Board's nominee for the presidency of the A.U.A. travelled across the continent with the Directors, Regional and Board, as they went home. Any clear notion of the factors involved in these decisions of the Board took longer to spread.

A few in Boston had heard, by way of informed discussion, that Dana Greeley's name was, on the basis of the sampling taken by the Board, a 3-to-1 favorite over any other possible candidate named. Another outstanding parish minister was known to be second-favorite on that list. But we knew, too, that the sample of sentiment was relatively small and clearly not decisive for Board thinking. There were also informal reports

that after a "strong president" the Board "didn't want another right away." It was no news at all to people "in the political know" that most of the regional directors didn't want another "strong president."

In conversation on March 5, 6, or 7, before any official report of Board of Directors and regional directors' deliberations had been received, several men in the Boston area came to the conclusion that a good case could be made for Ernest Kuebler's nomination. He had worked long, hard and creatively in the administration of Frederick Eliot. He had made significant contributions in religious education. He was familiar with administration. If many, who called him friend, later voted for another candidate for the A.U.A. presidency, it was not primarily because of any glaring inability on his part, nor out of slight personal regard. Immediately after his nomination, without specific confrontation with facts that later raised issues, many, including Dana Greeley and myself, wrote Ernest Kuebler the honest congratulation we felt he deserved on being nominated and pledged our support to him in the presidency. Few that I know or have heard about voted against Ernest Kuebler as a person in the election contest which developed. Contrary voting was based primarily on policies alternative to those stated in the communications sent out on March 7 from the chairman and on March 27 from the committee of the Board "appointed to procure and file a petition and place its candidate's name on the ballot and to publicize and implement the Board's action in choosing its candidate." (Appendix 4.)

If Ernest Kuebler had been nominated by the Board simply as, in its best judgement, the candidate best qualified to carry on with the job and fill the unexpired three-year term of Frederick Eliot, he might have been elected without opposition. Opposition first developed over the *policies* stated by the regional directors and adopted by the Board and as a result of inferences made from those policies. When the Board chairman's report was received in the churches typewriters began to clatter and wires to sing with the churches' criticism and opposition.

The first exposition of Board action in nominating Ernest Kuebler by petition was dated March 7. On March 10, Frank B. Frederick, general counsel of the A.U.A., sent out a communication repeating the information of Dr. Kuebler's nomination by petition on the initiative of the Board, and then set forth "in brief" to the churches and fellowships "the nominating procedures by petition" for the office of president as follows:

Article VIII, Section 5, of the By-Laws requires signatures of not less than twenty-five voting members of churches or fellowships which are members of the Association, but not more than five such members of any

member church or fellowship shall be counted as part of the required twenty-five signatures. It is also required that a separate nomination petition shall be signed for each candidate. Petitions for such nominations must be filed by March 27, 1958. (Appendix 3.)

Petition forms were prepared and made available to churches and fellowships through the secretary of the Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston. Any nominee was required to sign each set (five signatures from five churches or fellowships) assenting to his candidacy.

In the seventeen days between Frank Frederick's communication to the churches and fellowships and the March 27 deadline for filing of nominations, three additional candidates were nominated by petition. They qualified in this order: the Rev. Donald Harrington, minister of the Community Church of New York City; Dr. Thaddeus B. Clark, minister of the First Unitarian Church, St. Louis, Missouri; Dr. Dana McLean Greeley, minister of the Arlington Street Church, Boston, Massachusetts.

On April 1, 1958, Mason F. McGinness, executive administrator, informed the churches and fellowships that "four candidates have been nominated by petition for the Presidency of the American Unitarian Association and have accepted the nomination." They were listed in alphabetical order: Clark, Greeley, Harrington and Kuebler.

The Issues

The committee of the Board of Directors appointed "to publicize and implement the Board's action in choosing its candidate" went to its job with all possible zeal, knowing that as of that day three other candidates were officially in the field. Its report, dated March 27, was entitled: "The action of the Board in choosing its candidate and the qualifications of Dr. Kuebler." (Appendix 4.) In the hands of the churches and fellowships this was the first "campaign document." As such, it was important in shaping the issues of the campaign.

Adding to the development of issues, Thaddeus Clark put his point of view on the record on April 1, together with a statement withdrawing his name from candidacy (Appendix 6), and on April 8 Donald Harrington sent out a personal letter of withdrawal from the campaign followed by a longer statement of withdrawal which was sent to the denomination on April 16 (Appendix 8). Finally, the position of Dana McLean Greeley was stated in letters, the first dated April 11, sent to the denomination in his behalf by a "movement" organized to seek his election. (Appendix 7).

Issue Number One -- "Study"

That the Unitarian denomination would be studying itself --its purposes, its organizational structure, the relation of the office of the president to the Board and to the regions, and its financial situation -- was obvious to all in 1958. Such study was inevitable for the simple reason that the Unitarian denomination had joined with the Universalist in an earnest attempt to unite the two bodies on a continental and regional level. A merger study under the capable direction of the Rev. William B. Rice was already underway. The Joint Merger Commission was already involving both denominations in study. It had set up a schedule according to which, if the churches and fellowships of the two bodies so chose, it was possible that merger could be effected by May Meetings 1961. In the Spring of 1958, then, there certainly was basis for the Board's statements and thinking that "the next three years" would be a time for denominational and interdenominational study.

The issue was not therefore *to study* or *not to study* organization and reorganization. The difference of opinion growing in the Association and between candidates was as to whether study would be the "most important" or more simply *an* important part of denominational policy. For Thaddeus Clark, member of the Board and short time candidate, "A denominational commitment to the task of rethinking is surely the most important concern before us now." This seemed clearly to be the Board policy, too. There were at least intimations that most of the Board went along with Dr. Clark in his judgment that "no other issue is really important at this time, and no candidate is important." After three years of study, Dr. Clark trusted that a contested election in the denomination might be "intelligent and informed." "At the moment," he wrote in his withdrawal statement, a contested election "could be only distracting and busied with inconsequential whims of personal preference" (Appendix 6).

Dr. Kuebler made no such extreme statement. The communications from the Board reported that its members conceived "the next three years" as "years of transition" with "general agreement on the importance of this issue" of study and stated that "this general agreement of the Board influenced its selection of a candidate" (Appendix 4). On the occasion of his nomination it was stated that Dr. Kuebler approved the Board's general policy of "study" and his later statements, though tempering the Board's first statement, reaffirmed it. Several members of the Board and Dr. Kuebler himself probably would not have agreed with Dr. Clark's single-minded insistence that, in comparison with "study," "no other issue is really important at this time, and no candidate is important." However,

at the time of his withdrawal, Dr. Clark's statement, coming from an active member of the Board, and his decision to support Kuebler with the declaration that "my concern is the same as his, as I understand it," appeared to add up to a clarification of the Board's policy statement. Certainly it was so taken by many and as such tended to call forth intensified efforts in search of an alternative policy and candidate.

On April 8 the Rev. Donald Harrington withdrew from the still-developing contest for the presidency. In doing so he urged the passage at May Meetings of a resolution calling for a "new commission of Appraisal" and, in addition, for the creation of "an unofficial watchdog Committee for renewed Unitarian Advance to formulate the questions for which answers should be sought and to seek leadership which we shall need." Certainly he was in favor of "study."

On April 16, from 25 Beacon Street, Harrington sent out a further statement containing not simply a sanction of a policy of study but listing a nine-point program urging that "the attack upon the issues must begin at once" (Appendix 8). Thus in both of his public statements Harrington agreed that study was a necessary and inevitable part of a policy for the next three years but carefully coupled it with insistence on continued Unitarian Advance during that same period.

From personal conversation with both Donald Harrington and Dana Greeley during this time, separately and together, I can attest that they were in essential agreement that, with the proposed merger underway, "study was inevitable" during the next three years. Both agreed, moreover, that the denomination should not, during that time, be left to drift in self-study but that strong leadership should be given for continuing Unitarian Advance. The Board may not have believed or wished to give the impression that "study" was enough for an "interim" of three years. This, however, was the impression created by its first public statements (Appendices 2 and 4).

The first public statement from the committee which backed the candidacy of Dana Greeley was, after its publication, often criticized by Board members as being "a failure to understand what the Board meant" by its stated policy. Perhaps it was. It was, however, an honest response to the impression created in many minds at the time by the Board's statements. "This," said the Greeley statement, "is no time to mark time. Unitarianism is not a patient to be taken to the hospital for[a] serious operation. We are a young and vigorous movement and can move ahead even as we reassess the methods of our reorganization." "Study"

as part of a policy, yes, but with a continued insistence on the policy of Unitarian Advance; "transition" from Unitarianism to Unitarian Universalist merger, yes, if the churches and fellowships so decide; but let there be no let down, no break with our dynamic immediate past. In this both candidates were agreed.

Issue Number Two -- Development

Very specifically in the minds of many of those backing the candidacy of Dana Greeley, and clearly in his mind, was the fate of the proposed "Development Fund" campaign during the "next three years." The Board's first policy statement did not mention it at all. Frank Schramm's letter, quoted in the second Board communication did not mention it. The committee which had drafted that second communication did not suggest promotion of the Development Fund which for years had been discussed, and for months had dragged along, unable to get off the ground.

Dr. Greeley was vitally interested in having the Unitarian Development Fund program move successfully to its financial goal. He knew that the campaign would have to be conducted at the same time that merger study and steps toward consolidation with the Universalists were underway. But to him and to most of those backing him it was unthinkable that the Development Fund campaign should be lost as a goal during "interim years" of study, or under-emphasized in its importance, or fail.

Granting the importance and indeed the inevitability of interdenominational study under the conditions of attempted merger, it was a clear and urgent conviction of the Greeley supporters that the Development Fund must be successfully raised even under these difficult conditions. Actually the men and women who initially sought to persuade Dana Greeley to contest the Board nomination did so in large measure because they believed he could better help to achieve the Development Fund goals than could the Board's candidate. Put bluntly, the recent years of Unitarian expansion had, by virtue of the vigorously iconoclastic attitude of many, if not a majority, of the "new Unitarians," tended to alienate many traditional Unitarians. Indeed, politically, the "new Unitarians" of the last twenty years obviously used their democratic right in seeking greater power in the denomination -- and achieving it. This, of course, meant a diminution of the political strength of the traditional Unitarians. It also often resulted in disinterest on their part, sometimes their alienation, and, once in a while, it generated

hostility or defection. The result was that religiously and economically many traditional Unitarians had withdrawn or were tempted to withdraw their interest and economic support from the work of the rapidly growing denomination.

To bring these persons back into the life of the churches in interest, in participation, and in economic support was a goal many Unitarian ministers worked toward on the local level. The Development Fund campaign revealed the problem to be acute on a continental level as well. A breach was threatened between "new" and "old" Unitarians. Who could best heal that breach? Dr. Kuebler, though never an extremist, had long been clearly identified with the "new Unitarians." His position in educational theory was essentially theirs. As a denominational official he certainly had never cultivated a split between "new" and "old" Unitarians. He strove otherwise; but people knew, despite his official carefulness of statement, where his heart was.

Dr. Greeley through his years at Arlington Street Church had managed not only to keep but to cultivate and build into the life of that church many individuals of genuinely traditional viewpoint in Unitarianism. Yet he also managed to make it a growing church with a door open to all seekers after truth. He did in fact, in his dedication to basic congregational polity, manage to minister to a society composed of persons of both the "old" and the "new" points of view. Dr. Greeley was a "middle-of-the-roader" who had proven that he could work creatively in that way. Therefore, many who knew him urged him to accept nomination by petition.

Though he was averse to running "against the Board" and its candidate, the fact that others had announced their opposition candidacies made it easier for him to consider running. In the end he accepted the nomination because he believed the "interim years" were being overemphasized at such at the expense of continued Unitarian Advance, especially in Development Fund possibilities and because he (and those advocating his candidacy) strongly opposed the Board policy of "division and delegation" of the responsibilities and powers of the president.

Issue Number Three -- The Office of President

The rise in importance and power of the regions and their executive officers, who in theory were also regional representatives of the continental administration, has already been discussed as being part of the

first campaign of Frederick Eliot. By virtue of his personality and his being-in-office for more than twenty years, Dr. Eliot became "a strong president." One might say it admiringly. From the point of view of competing powers, the fact was noted frequently though seldom with admiration. A hidden but active competition was more typical.

Turning to the first report of the Board of Directors meetings of March 4 and 5 from the straight hand of Lawrence Brooks (Appendix 2), a reading of paragraphs 2, 3, 4, and 5 seems clearly to suggest that the regional directors, among other possibilities, saw in their invitation to attend these deliberations an opportunity further to increase their growing power by a suggested study aimed at "a division and delegation of some of the responsibilities of the office" of president. The Board as a whole refused to support Thaddeus Clark's suggested resolution to bring about "division and delegation" by a suggested May Meetings resolution, but did appoint a study committee for that purpose and did nominate its candidate on the understanding that there would be such a study.

Whatever else may have been the purposes of "study" beyond the Merger proceedings already underway -- and there is evidence that there were many other purposes in the air -- one clearly stated purpose was to devise ways and means of dividing and delegating the power of the president. Clearly on record (Appendices 2 and 4) is the fact that the Board chose a nominee for the presidency who was fitted for the conduct of such a study and in sympathy with its stated purpose. In its second report to the denomination the Board subcommittee stated that "We assume that Dr. Kuebler, if elected, will take up the duties of his office with no preconceived plan for its re-definition . . ." One could agree that this might be so. Yet the fact was that the Board's subcommittee authorized to conceive the plan of redefinition was in majority at least already on record for "division and delegation." Certainly it was reasonable to expect that Dr. Kuebler, knowing all this and knowing to whom he owed his nomination, would be open to the notion of "division and delegation" of presidential powers once the specific plan was devised.

To those of us who believed that democratic government is most democratic and secure when it takes place as a result of the working of a balance of powers, this action of the Board in agreeing to carry out a recommendation of the regional directors to decrease the traditional powers of the president, and thereby magnify their own, went far to create an imbalance of power in favor of Board and regions at the expense of

the office of president. Those who favored an extension of regional and Board power were thus generally in favor of "dividing the office of the president," his traditional ceremonial functions probably to be invested in the moderator, his executive functions carried out directly under the Board of Directors which would appoint him. He would not be elected independently by the churches and fellowships and therefore would have no status independent of the Board. Those favoring "a strong president" wanted the traditional office and method of election continued, thus limiting and "holding in balance" the powers of president, Board, and regions.

As campaign issues, the phrases "strong president" or "weak president" had little to do with the candidates involved except as those men represented one or the other of these policies. Clark and Kuebler were obviously "weak president" men. Just as clearly, Harrington and Greeley were "strong president" men. Said Harrington in his withdrawal statement: ". . . we must not, as some seem to have proposed, decapitate the denomination. Rather, we need a President who has authority with his staff, including a very able executive Vice-President . . ."

Of course, the president was executive officer of the Board under the system then operating. But he was also elected by the churches and fellowships and also responsible to them with at least a modicum of independence. In some degree, never clearly defined in any policy or power struggle, and all the better because not clearly defined, the president of the A.U.A. was "a friend in court" for churches and fellowships and for ministers.

As the power of the regional directors grew through the years, it was especially important that both churches and ministers have such an office with which to counsel and to which, in crises of life, they might appeal. Many ministers felt strongly about this. In a very real sense the life of a minister in a church is made secure or insecure, in the first instance, by his church. With his church behind him no regional man and no Board member and no elected official may really threaten him. For any of them to do so openly would probably only strengthen the tie the minister had with his congregation. Yet, if a minister's relation with his congregation is shaky or if for any reason he wishes to move to another church, he is, under the present system of candidating, almost abjectly beholden to regional directors and to the Department of the Ministry in Boston. It is still possible that a friend of the minister may have friends in a given church to whom a good word may be passed in favor of the minister and he thus be given a chance to be heard by a church with a vacancy. But this once-popular old method of candidating was always haphazard and in

any case it is not now approved by the Association.

Actually, under the present system of candidating, no official of high or intermediate or low degree can "get a church" for a man. What can be done is to include the man's name on a list of candidates for recommendation to a church. His name may be kept off a list, or, if his name is put on a list as it may be at the request of a minister, it may be so placed there with "no recommendation." After all, denominational officials are hired to share their judgments, pro and con, about ministers fitting into particular churches. Usually it is good judgment, though conscientious officials are frequently in a quandary as to which minister will really fit into which church. It is no easy task in any case.

Yet denominational officials are also human and subject to poor judgment and personal preference, and once in a while may even be prejudiced for or against a man or a church. Further, while only the church itself may call its minister, one word properly inflected, one gesture expressively made to the right member of a pulpit committee, may keep a man out of serious consideration for a church.

A balance of power between president, Board and regional directors assures an added and powerful "friend in court" for ministers, churches, and causes. Only in such a balance are all these most secure in democratic institutions. A church is not primarily a business organization. It is liberal religion at work in congregational polity; therefore it was argued that a "strong president" was needed to match the strength of Board and regional directors; tension between these is rightly built into the democratic institution. This is the way the committee backing the candidacy of Dana Greeley felt about it in 1958. This essentially was the position of Donald Harrington. Thaddeus Clark and Ernest Kuebler, if elected, might in fact have become "strong presidents." Their platforms and their backing suggested however that they were candidates on a "weak president" platform. Just before the day of election in May, a local minister asserted in a broadside that Dr. Kuebler had been nominated by the Board "because the Board wanted a strong President." I have no doubt that the Board believed in Ernest Kuebler's qualifications as a person of strength equal to the task it saw him performing. But, as the terms "strong" and "weak" president are used here, it is fairly clear that the Board and the regional directors, who first suggested the Board policy, wanted a "weak president." Indeed, in the second letter from the Board, it was clearly stated, as one of six considerations for selection of the candidate, that

since we realized that the next three years for which we were nominating a candidate would be years of transition in which the office should be redefined, we should give careful consideration to the possibility that a minister deeply settled in one of our outstanding churches might be rightly reluctant to surrender his parish for such a position until it became more clearly defined, as the Board felt it should and would probably be by decisions on issues we shall face in these next three years. (Appendix 4.)

Neither Greeley nor Harrington, both in "outstanding churches" and numbers 1 and 2 respectively on the list of results of reports solicited from the churches and fellowships, were asked if they would serve. The Board seemed to be seeking a president whom it believed would be likely to sanction the "division and delegation" of the powers of the presidency during his term of office.

To favor a continuation of the presidential office as constituted meant, therefore, that an old friend of many of us must be opposed. Few enjoyed this prospect or liked the prospect of a "divisive campaign" which an always gentlemanly Frank Schramm and many another in and out of the Board saw as a possibility. These unpleasant aspects of campaigning were seriously considered by Dr. Greeley and his supporters at length when it became public knowledge, after he announced his candidacy, that Clark and Harrington had withdrawn theirs. There was no certainty of election against Board policy and candidate. There was the hazard of campaigning. The importance of the issues, and the fact that one way or another a most important issue -- namely the power of the presidency -- would be decided in the "next three years," finally kept Dana Greeley in the race for election against Ernest Kuebler.

One other factor was important in Dr. Greeley's decision. Although Dr. Kuebler was in effect pledged by the Board to be uncommitted concerning Unitarian Universalist merger, Dana Greeley served a "merged" church, had personally been working in the direction of merger for most of his ministerial life, and wanted it to come off as a fruitful culmination of many past efforts. He thought merger might be brought to pass during those "next three years." He entered the campaign committed personally and publicly to Unitarian Universalist merger and well aware that he might as president for "the next three years" have real influence in helping, finally, to bring it about.

The Campaign

Between March 10, 1958, when legal counsel had informed the

churches and fellowships of nominating procedures, and April 1, when Mason McGinness notified the denomination of the results under those procedures, four candidates had been "nominated by petition for the Presidency of the American Unitarian Association" and had accepted the nomination: Thaddeus B. Clark, Dana McLean Greeley, Donald Harrington, and Ernest Kuebler. By April 16 the denomination knew that Clark and Harrington had withdrawn their candidacies and supported Kuebler. The contest was then drawn between Greeley and Kuebler.

At this point, two statements from headquarters had already been sent out by the Board concerning its nominee with the reasons for nominating him (Appendices 2 and 4). The second of these, sent out at a time when other men were being nominated, may be considered as a campaign document designed, as the Board committee openly said it was, "to publicize and implement the Board's action in choosing its candidate." This document presents Board members both as expecting and not expecting opposition to their candidate. The vote of the Board to "publicize and implement" the nomination of its candidate was taken before other men had announced their candidacies. It was, however, carried out at a time when it was clear that an election contest was in process.

When the vote to "publicize and implement" the Board nomination was carried out by letter dated March 17 (Appendix 4), the Board — as Board — was clearly acting as an electioneering committee for its candidate and against the candidates of several score churches and fellowships. Sensitive toward its responsibility to the denomination and aware of the position in which it had been put by opposition candidates, the Board did no more to seek the election for its nominee. With good grace and loyalty to the Association and to its nominee, members of the Board thereafter supported Kuebler with apparent unanimity but within their rights only as individuals. To this end a Committee to Elect Ernest Kuebler was formed to match that which sent out its first letter in behalf of Dana Greeley on April 11. The Rev. William W. Lewis was chairman of the Kuebler Committee; the Rev. Joseph Barth was chairman of the Greeley Committee.

Behind their formal statements each committee was working for three primary purposes: first, to elect its candidate; second, to clarify (or, in the way of campaigns, sometimes for some people, to confuse) the issues; and, third, to carry out the first two purposes in such a way as would best benefit the denomination and make the new president's term in office most fruitful for all concerned.

That the campaign leaders for both candidates did their best to keep these three goals in balance seems certain. That the issues were not seen, drawn, or understood alike is all too clear. That there is a very human tendency toward emotionalism, name-calling, and attribution of the worst motives to the opposition in any protracted and important contest is generally acknowledged. That it operated among Unitarians in the Spring of 1958 there is no doubt in the minds of those involved in that political campaign. Yet on the whole and in general within the limits of the time allotted, the issues did slowly emerge. Most lay and ministerial delegates to the May Meetings in the latter part of the final month did join one or another campaign, and, with relatively few exceptions on either side, discussion and debate and pronouncements were directed toward the three-fold effort stated above with dignity, in good feeling and sometimes in good humor. In short, the campaign was with very few individual exceptions a clean one. The leadership of both campaigns and the candidates strove to this end.

The major attempt was to win commitment from May Meetings delegates to candidates and to their understanding of issues. In this matter the Greeley forces were probably more aggressive. "Greeley ran scared all the way," said one politically conscious layman. If the Board took initiative first in behalf of its nominee that initiative was struggled for. Early statements from the Greeley forces which called for program, development, and continued Unitarian Advance, from the Greeley point of view, soon seemed to many people to put him in the offensive position.

That the campaign was carried on with no great hurt to the denominational spirit, which at any time probably carries within itself the possibility of being sundered, is due, in important measure, also, to the objective dedication of the Board to the good of the denomination and its quick reassessment of its own position in relation to its nominee once it realized that opposition was developing. This official Board attitude was reflected in large part and significantly reinforced by the scrupulous and straightforward fairness with which Mason McGinness, the executive administrator, carried on denominational policy in relation to both of the campaigns and the nominee which each was backing. At that time and even more clearly after Dana Greeley's election, the members of the staff of the A.U.A., considering the tension under which an unaccustomed election contest put them, proved themselves on the whole to be self-disciplined, fair, and reasonable men and women. As in the Association generally, exceptions tend to spotlight the generalization. This is not to say that there were not at the time claims and an occasional charge of

unfairness, made by one side against the other, or by either side of somebody in some stance or other. Sober assessment of the 1958 election indicates that the denomination need not be overly ashamed of itself in the general conduct of a contested election.

Actually there were some specific goods which grew out of the contest.

A political vitalization and an actual increase of participation in denominational affairs was apparent during and after the election. The churches and fellowships were represented and actively represented at May Meetings in 1958 in greater degree than ever before.

It was heartening to many to have evidence that on issues which really mattered it was possible in a short time to rouse the whole denomination on a continent-wide basis to thoughtfulness and commitment. Clearly it was possible to do this with little money, with key leadership, dedication and with "a cause."

Probably more than any other single part of the country, the New England region came alive to the possibilities of its own potency. Not that either candidate in the election won all of New England. As it turned out, New England did not support one candidate over another by a much larger majority that did the West Coast or the Southwest. The Middle Atlantic states and the Midwest were divided almost evenly. Indeed the overall vote from 1,543 delegates was very close: 823 for Greeley and 720 for Kuebler, a difference of 103.

Yet, in New England, regional participation was elicited for the first time, as such, by both sides. Representatives of the smaller units of organization met one another, worked together and found their own strength. People who had felt "out of it" during the denominational growth and the increase of "new churches" suddenly found themselves very much in it and important to both nominees. This awakening in New England had a direct bearing on the later success of raising Development funds during the following three years. Probably this was so in some degree all over the country.

Probably, also, the participation of churches in the study of Unitarian Universalist consolidation that took place soon afterward was enhanced by the stimulation and organization of the 1958 political campaign.

Finally, one dramatic fact developing from the campaign should be noted as heartening and perhaps at least a little securing for all those of us who cherish the continued hope for our Association of churches

honoring all its variety and pluralism of point of view.

There were those in the Board of the A.U.A.; there were those concerned over the hazards of a political campaign in our Association; there were those standing aloof from the campaigning who were afraid or sure that any such campaign would split the Association wide open. Indeed, a very few, from their own point of view, might have hoped that this would be the case -- and that the victor in the split would once and for all take all the spoils.

The fear most often expressed was that the campaign would "turn into a Humanist-Theist war." Or it was said that the conservative and radical elements would "take over the campaign," or; again, that New England, already more than a little insecure as a result of the influx of new Unitarians in Southeast, Southwest, and West, would be mowed down; or, the opposite of this, that New England would further alienate the none-too-secure new Churches, fellowships and regions.

None of these fearful predictions came to pass. Probably this was the case in part at least because the fears were present and conscious in the minds both of the two candidates and of their campaigners as eventualities to be avoided. It was the case because the campaign issues on both sides were conceived out of sincere interest in the continued welfare of the Association. It was the case because in theory both candidates and campaign leadership believed basically in the theory of congregational polity and realized that commitment to the pluralistic nature of every church and of our Association of churches must be honored as the price of any effective associative life. We talked this way. We said we believed what we talked.

Frankly, however, most people were at least a little hesitant toward any vigorous testing of this faith. A contested election was such a test. Actually, the attempt by Dana Greeley to garner a campaign committee to stand on a platform of practical issues against a Board-defined policy and to be elected because of his advocacy of a different policy presented a crucial practical test not only of his faith in congregational polity and a pluralistic church community but of the faith of every person in our association of churches. Would anybody but New England conservatives support him? Would he personally, would his faith and his understanding of issues be rejected by doctrinaire-tending humanists or iconoclasts? Probably Ernest Kuebler had similar wonderings in his heart from a different point of view.

Actually, the campaign was still very young when both Kuebler

and Greeley began to have the answer which should hearten the still youthful Unitarian Universalist Association with its even wider diversity of faith, hope, and tradition. The general support of both candidates came from across every theological, economic, ethical or parochial line which anybody cares to draw. The close final vote for the candidates shows no overwhelming sectional, theological, economic or sociological preponderance of opinion in favor of either candidate in the contested election of 1958, or for that matter in the contested presidency of the U.U.A. in 1961. No region voted more than 2 to 1 for either candidate. Kuebler had good support in Massachusetts; Greeley had good support in Illinois and California. Indeed, the Southwest favored Greeley by a larger percentage of its vote than did New England, and two of the long time leaders of the Humanist movement, Curtis Reese and Edwin Buehrer, as well as the grand old man of social radicalism, John Haynes Holmes, supported Greeley. Of course there were leanings of particular points of view to particular candidates, but neither candidate won nearly all the people identified with any particular theological or sectional or ethical orientation.

In this matter, perhaps Dana Greeley had an advantage over Kuebler in that in his church in Boston he had proven his dedication to congregational polity and to pluralism in a larger degree to more people than had Ernest Kuebler advocating a "new" religious educational policy had possibly been able to do in the denomination.

Certainly it is true that, in winning, Dana Greeley drew together a support which crossed all the much feared "lines of division" amongst us. There is a sense in which his political victory -- and the very closeness of it -- is a tribute to the thoughtful dedication of a whole Association to the principle of pluralism which is developing among us in our practice of traditional congregational polity.

The 1961 Campaign

Dana McLean Greeley had been elected President of the A.U.A. in May 1958 with support that crossed all political, regional, and theological lines of tendential separation. His principal concerns had been, first, to place himself in creative working relation with the Board of Directors, the A.U.A. staff and the regional directors (most of whom had not favored his candidacy); second, if possible to bring A.U.A. - U.C.A. merger to reality by the end of his three-year term; third, before merger to reach the financial goals set by the Development Fund; and, fourth, to improve the

A.U.A. services to the churches and, in the last months of that three-year term, as instructed by the A.U.A. and U.C.A. boards, to effect whatever degree of administrative consolidation might be possible in advance of the formal and final merger decision which was, with good reason, confidently expected in May, 1961.

Meanwhile in Syracuse on October 29, 1959, Dr. William B. Rice, chairman of the Joint Merger Commission, reported to a joint meeting of the Unitarian and Universalist denominations the final results of the merger study and announced its recommendations. In all the hazards, difficulties, and delicate diplomacy of reaching a preliminary consolidation vote and drafting a *modus vivendi* for bringing it about (the Green Book), William Rice had earned the appreciation of both denominations for his good efforts. In these labors he had presented himself to the denomination as a calm and deliberative mind, capable in democratic leadership, and a hard worker in the liberal religious cause.

It should have come as no surprise, then, that, as early as Syracuse, several Universalists as well as some among the Unitarians who had not supported Dr. Greeley in his 1958 campaign began to speak of William Rice as a likely candidate for the presidency of the consolidated Unitarian Universalist denomination. At that time the seeds of a contest for the first presidency of the Unitarian Universalist Association were planted. In May 1960, at continental meetings, the two denominations implemented the Green Book's temporary constitution and by-laws by appointing "A Joint Subcommittee on Nominations." Each denominational Board appointed four persons to that subcommittee, which was specifically charged to "devise and institute the most appropriate means of inviting suggestions from Churches, Fellowships, Unitarian Regions, Universalist State Conventions, other Unitarian and Universalist organizations and interested individuals with respect to candidates" for nominations for Moderator, two Vice Presidents, President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the new association. The joint subcommittee was further empowered to "make a comprehensive report to the two Boards and may include its own recommendations with respect to any office." The subcommittee on Nominations went to work in earnest in the Fall of 1960, holding three meetings prior to the Joint Board meetings which were held to hear its report on January 11, 1961.

The joint subcommittee received many suggestions from the denominations as a result of its inquiries. Early in its deliberations it also received a resolution from the U.C.A. Board declaring that it was the

Board's hope that the joint subcommittee would not seriously consider either of the incumbent denominational leaders (Giles or Greeley) for the office of president of the new association, a point of view in which it was understood that Philip Giles, executive officer of the Universalists, concurred.

Unofficially it was said that Dana Greeley's name was clearly at the head of the list of names suggested for the office of president, with William Rice's name in second place with about two-thirds as many backers as Greeley had. Philip Giles' name was in third place in popularity. The joint subcommittee did not regard the denominational communications either from churches, fellowships, or regions, or from the U.C.A. Board, as an instruction to nominate. Obviously it would and did take all suggestions seriously. In the end, a trustworthy unofficial report indicated that the joint nominating committee recommended to the two denominational Boards meeting in joint session on January 11, 1961, that Dana Greeley be nominated as their candidate for the office of president, and noting that William Rice had sufficient support to be worthy of comment.

According to unofficial report, the U.C.A. Board placed on record at the beginning of the joint Board sessions in the morning of January 11 its unanimous conviction, officially reported on January 12, 1961 (Appendix 9), that "neither of the present chief executive officers should be a candidate" for the office of president. The U.C.A. Board favored Rice's nomination. The A.U.A. Board was reliably reported to have gone on record as favoring with almost matching unanimity the nomination of all of the candidates suggested to it by the joint nominating committee, several of whom (including Greeley) were at that time serving as denominational officers. The Boards met separately and together through most of the day. Finally, failing to reach unanimity on either candidate, the joint Boards compromised and approved dual nominations for the presidency -- Greeley and Rice (Appendix 9). Thus the Boards approved in principle a contested election for the presidency of the about-to-be-created Unitarian Universalist Association.

Campaign Issues

The issues of the 1961 Presidential campaign were, with one exception, relatively muted. The major exciting fact of the Spring of 1961 was the pending formalization of consolidation of the Unitarian and Universalist denominations into the Unitarian Universalist Association. Both Dana Greeley and William Rice had long been advocates of merger.

Both had had significant hand in bringing it about. As candidates both sought credit for their efforts now about to come to fruition. In acting as chairman of the Joint Merger Commission, William Rice had necessarily adopted an objective attitude toward merger; yet his followers claimed him "father of merger." As president during the "interim years," Dana Greeley had openly spoken and labored for merger, leaving doors gracefully open to those who opposed it. Interested in successful merger, each candidate approached both denominations gingerly, not wanting to alienate any person or society in the delicate business of actual consolidation and not wanting to make his task of administration more difficult should he win.

Though the issue of "division and delegation" of the powers of the president had been laid to rest by the A.U.A. Board at its February 1959 meeting, at which time it "solved" the problem by appointing an Executive Vice-President, echoes of the issue were again heard. Rice was apparently willing to consider "division and delegation"; Greeley was not. "Brown Book" merger organization proposals probably softened all the political issues but one.

The chief heat of the campaign was generated in the Unitarian denomination by charges that the A.U.A.'s fiscal policy was jeopardizing the future good of the cause. The charges were denied and made again and denied again and it soon became apparent that the "ins" were catching it from the "outs" in a typical campaign manner.

Some people complained that the Boards, in nominating two presidential candidates, had rigged a "popularity contest." Others wished the Boards had nominated more than two people. Both candidates had committees working for them with William Rice apparently in control of his own forces, speaking quietly, making his attack on his opponent and his record in friendly fashion, and presenting himself to both denominations in good-humored Yankee fashion as a democrat, a decentralizer favoring regional recognition and denominational fiscal responsibility, if not indeed a reduction of administration expenditures. Dana Greeley's committee had Jack Mendelsohn as its co-chairman and he, too, developed a low-key campaign with an emphasis on decentralized campaigning in the regions and as little speechmaking as possible by Dana Greeley, who was trying as well as he could to keep his major effort on his job as president of the American Unitarian Association.

The contest for presidential office, along with contests for lesser offices resulting from petition candidacies for seats on the new U.U.A.

Board, guaranteed a high degree of representation from the churches and fellowships at the May Meetings where election took place. Again Dana Greeley won the election. Again it was by a vote so close that the loser must certainly have felt honored by his support. The vote for Greeley -- 1135; for Rice -- 980. Out of 2115 votes cast, the election was won and lost by only 155 votes.

To his credit, it should be said that his long years in the ministry of a church of congregational polity, plus his natural sense of fairness and fellow-feeling, have made it possible for Dana Greeley to conduct his office, after close election contests, with inclusiveness of interest in and concern for over-all denominational welfare.

It is surely not much fun to win or to lose a contested election in a religious denomination when, almost inevitably, that election is between old friends. Winner or loser, I expect most of the active participants in the presidential elections of 1958 and 1961 feel this way. That contested election should always be possible in a democratic organization there can be no slightest doubt. However, the gain that is in them, for the denomination or for particular points of view within the denomination, is won at some cost and risk on the part of persons, groups and the movement as a whole.

Winning, it is not easy to bring the whole denomination back into a united creative thrust ahead; not always easy to re-establish friendly and mutually trustful personal relations out of the excitements and sometimes the heat of contest.

Losing, it is not an easy thing to reaffirm in action denominational loyalty and take up again objective, if not indeed friendly, relationships with past opponents. Winning worthily and losing well are subtle and highly civilized arts. If election contests continue among us, we shall need to learn to practice those arts with increasing zeal for the good of our common religious cause.

NOTES

1. See Earl Morse Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism In Transylvania, England, and America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 441; also David B. Parke, *The Epic Of Unitarianism: Original Writings from the History of Liberal Religion* (Boston: Starr King Press, 1957), pp. 100-104.

2. Parke, *Epic of Unitarianism*, p. 125.

APPENDIX 1

February 20, 1958

TO THE UNITARIAN MINISTERS AND CLERKS OF PARISHES AND FELLOWSHIPS:

Following the sudden death of Dr. Frederick May Eliot, a special meeting of the Executive Committee was held on February 20, 1958. In addition to the Executive Committee, members of the Board of Directors who were available attended the meeting.

The Executive Committee voted to call a special meeting of the Board of Directors for March 4 and 5, at which meeting the principal item of business will be to consider candidates for the office of President to fill the vacancy by election at the Annual Meeting in May, 1958. The Board desires to have as many suggestions as possible. The Regional Directors are attending this special meeting of the Board, and suggestions should be sent to the Regional Directors or to the Secretary of the Association.

At the meeting, the Executive Committee appointed the Reverend Mason F. McGinness, who has been acting as Assistant to the President, to be the Executive Administrator of the Association to act under the supervision of the Executive Committee until the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors otherwise votes.

WALTER DONALD KRING
Secretary

APPENDIX 2

March 7, 1958

UNITARIAN MINISTERS, CLERKS, OR CHAIRMEN OF CHURCHES AND FELLOWSHIPS.

The Board of Directors of the American Unitarian Association met in Boston on Tuesday evening, March 4th, and all day Wednesday, March 5th, for the purpose of selecting a candidate for the office of President of the Association, to fill the three-year, unexpired term of Dr. Eliot.

In preparation for this meeting, the Board sent a letter to all ministers and clerks of Churches and Fellowships urging them to submit suggestions. In addition, at the request of the Board of Directors, the Regional Directors canvassed the people in their areas to the extent possible in the limited time.

Before the Board convened, all the Regional Directors met for several hours in Boston and on Tuesday evening presented their findings and recommendations to the Board. On Wednesday the Board considered the report of the Regional Directors, who suggested that the re-organization of the Association's operations be studied, and that the selection of a candidate be made with such a study in mind. The Regional Directors submitted names of candidates to be considered.

Before any selection was made, the duties of the office of President were carefully reviewed and the Board members unanimously agreed that a study of the organization and functioning of the Association, including the relation of the Regions of the Association, should be undertaken immediately. Many of the Directors pointed out that the duties and obligations pertaining to the office of President had become too complex and that there should be a division and delegation of some of the responsibilities of the office.

On the understanding that there would be such a study, the Board then spent the whole day considering all names that had been suggested. The Board felt that the person elected as President in May must be a person of proven administrative ability with wide knowledge of the continental Unitarian movement and one whose intimate knowledge of the organization and operations of the Association could best assist in a re-organization study.

After a series of preferential ballots, the Board unanimously voted to select Dr. Ernest W. Kuebler as its candidate for President of the Association. Dr. Kuebler's name was also among those recommended by the Regional Directors.

The Board appointed a committee of three to study re-organization, and the committee was instructed to make an interim report as soon as possible.

At the meeting, the Board of Directors was well represented geographically. The following members were present: Rev. Josiah R. Bartlett, Berkeley, California, Judge Lawrence G. Brooks, Malden, Mass., Mrs. Harry Dunlap Brown, Billerica, Mass., Judge H. Clay Burkholder, Lancaster, Penn., Rev. Thaddeus B. Clark, St. Louis, Missouri, Dr. Ralph F. Fuchs, Bloomington, Indiana, Dr. James A. Gibson, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, Rev. William P. Jenkins, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Rev. Walter D. Kring, New York, New York, Rev. John G. MacKinnon, Wilmington, Delaware, Mrs. Alfred E. Mudge, Brooklyn, New York, Mr. Samuel M. Myers, Cleveland, Ohio, Rev. Leslie T. Pennington, Chicago, Illinois, Miss Helen C. Robertson, Providence, Rhode Island, Mr. Frank H. Schramm, Burlington, Iowa, Hon. J. Ray Shute, Monroe, North Carolina, Mr. Kenneth A. Wells, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Mrs. Roy H. Wensberg, Mercer Island, Washington, Mr. Frederick S. Youngs, Bangor, Maine.

The Board made arrangements for Dr. Ernest W. Kuebler's name to be placed on the ballot by petition.

Sincerely yours,

LAWRENCE G. BROOKS
Chairman of the Board of Directors

APPENDIX 3

MEMORANDUM

TO: UNITARIAN MINISTERS AND CLERKS OR CHAIRMEN OF CHURCHES
AND FELLOWSHIPS

FROM: Frank B. Frederick, *General Counsel*

DATE: March 10, 1958

SUBJECT: Nominating Procedures for Office of President

The By-law provisions of the American Unitarian Association applicable to making nominations for the office of President under the circumstances caused by the sudden death of Dr. Eliot require that such nomination can be made only by petition. It is for this reason that the Board of Directors, in selecting Dr. Ernest W. Kuebler as its candidate, provided for his name to appear on the ballot by petition.

In brief, the nominating procedures by petition are as follows: Article VIII, Section 5, of the By-laws requires signatures of not less than twenty-five voting members of churches or fellowships which are members of the Association, but not more than five such members of any member church or fellowship shall be counted as part of the required twenty-five signatures. It is also required that a separate nomination petition shall be signed for each candidate. Petitions for such nominations must be filed by March 27, 1958. In order to avoid difficulties and misunderstandings on technical requirements, I have prepared a form of petition which meets all the requirements. With the limited time, it may be that some petitions may not be filed until March 21 or close to that time. It is most desirable that no petition be rejected because of failure to observe the technical requirements of the By-laws. Therefore, use of the prepared petition form is urged.

Anyone desiring one or more sets of petition should write immediately to the Secretary of the Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts, or to his Regional Director.

FRANK B. FREDERICK

APPENDIX 4

TO: UNITARIAN MINISTERS AND CLERKS OR CHAIRMEN OF CHURCHES
AND FELLOWSHIPS

FROM: The committee of the Board of Directors of the A.U.A. appointed to procure and file a petition and place its candidate's name on the ballot and to publicize and implement the Board's action in choosing its candidate," Vice-President Josiah R. Bartlett, Mrs. Harry Dunlap Brown and Rev. Leslie T. Pennington, Chairman.

DATE: March 27, 1958.

SUBJECT: The Action of the Board in Choosing Its Candidate and the Qualifications of Dr. Kuebler.

ENCLOSURE: Biographical notes on the Rev. Dr. Ernest W. Kuebler.

You have already received from Judge Lawrence G. Brooks, Chairman of the Board, his admirable, concise statement of March 7th on the thinking and action of the Board; and the memorandum of March 10th from Mr. Frank B. Frederick, General Counsel of the Association, explaining in full the procedure of nominating by petition, announcing that petition forms were available on request and that the deadline for filing petitions was March 27th.

LETTER TO BOARD MEMBERS FROM MR. SCHRAMM

The following letter of Mr. Frank H. Schramm of Burlington, Iowa, written to his fellow Board members on his own initiative on March 20th, seems to our committee so excellent a supplement to Judge Brooks' letter, that we have secured his permission to share it with all of you.

"Dear fellow Board member:

"I am writing to you out of my concern for the welfare of the Unitarian cause as it will be affected by the choice of Dr. Eliot's successor. I feel that our Board can take great satisfaction from the way in which we reached our major decisions at the Board meeting on March 5th, rising as we did above all partisanship, and placing the best interests of the entire denomination ahead of every other consideration. It is my hope that, between now and the May Meetings, an overwhelming majority of our fellow Unitarians can be persuaded, if they are not already in agreement with us, of the wisdom of our choice of Ernest Kuebler to administer the affairs of the American Unitarian Association during the transitional period which we have now entered. I am not hopeful, however, that this will be possible, unless we as individuals make every proper effort to explain to other persons and groups of persons the thinking which lay behind our choice.

"This thinking is briefly but most admirably set forth in Judge Brooks' letter of March 7th. Most important, I think, is his pointing out that we were agreed that a study of the function and organization of the A.U.A., and, specifically and especially, of the office of President, is urgently needed, and that we have already taken steps to initiate such a study. From this it follows, and this letter makes it very clear, that the next three years will be transitional in nature, and for this period we shall need a President, first of proven administrative ability, second, with a wide knowledge of the entire continental Unitarian movement, and third, one whose intimate knowledge of the organization and operations of the Association can best assist in a reorganization study. These requirements, of course, became increasingly clear to us that day as we dealt with the problems posed by the death of Dr. Eliot, and I feel that our decision to nominate and support Dr. Kuebler was, beyond question, wise, completely justifiable, and well nigh inevitable, especially in view of the approval of him by the Regional Directors, and the enthusiastic response from the headquarters staff when they learned of our decision.

"Within the last few days I have learned, as I am sure you have also, that petitions are being prepared for the nomination of a number of our ablest and most devoted ministers. This we expected. I feel, however, that it is now incumbent upon us, the Directors, to do everything in our power to make

certain that the denomination understands the reasons for our choice of Ernest Kuebler. This, I believe, calls for well considered and prompt action on the part of each of us, in addition to whatever action or statements are to come from the Board as a whole.

"It is, of course, my hope that some, if not all, of the other candidates may see fit to withdraw their names before the denomination becomes involved in a divisive campaign. And I am heartened in this hope, because our Board itself is in agreement that we will support our own candidate actively and without reservation, for I am sure that that was our unanimous decision.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

FRANK H. SCHRAMM."

THE THINKING AND ACTION OF YOUR BOARD

You will remember that this action was taken by the duly elected members of your Board representing every part of the United States and Canada and almost every shade of Unitarian belief and emphasis. This gathering included the Moderator of the Association and its three Vice-Presidents. The only Board Members absent were Mr. Campbell of Oklahoma, Mr. Dorr, Mr. Little and Mr. Stevens of New England, and Dr. Ross of California.

Judge Brooks stated in his letter how carefully the Board prepared for this meeting by soliciting suggestions from ministers, churches and fellowships of our entire movement, both directly and through the Regional Directors, by calling the Regional Directors into conference before the Board Meeting and into conference with the Board, and by Board conference with the headquarters staff. Never before in our experience has the Board sought and secured such wide and representative counsel in preparation for such important action.

The Regional Directors recommended to us a list of eight men. The first three were recommended as especially qualified by training and experience for the office of President if the Board agreed with the Regional Directors that this three-year term for which we were nominating a candidate should give primary emphasis to a redefinition of that office. Dr. Kuebler's name was among these three. One of the three subsequently withdrew his own name. The two remaining on this list, and the other five presented to us by the Regional Directors as of highest rank in the list suggested by their constituent churches and fellowships, included the highest ranking names in the list of thirty-six submitted directly to the Board by ministers, laymen, churches and fellowships. These seven were all on the list of eight men nominated by members of the Board and given serious consideration in their subsequent action. This list included the names of all men for whom nominating petitions have been circulated since that time.

Early in its deliberations the Board gave very careful consideration to the question of recommending to the Annual Meeting in May a proposal to redefine the office of President. It had before it the draft of a resolution to amend the By-Laws of the Association to this end, already submitted to the Business Committee for action at the Annual Meeting by Dr. Thaddeus B. Clark, on the condition of its approval by the Board. The Board concluded that the introduction of such a

resolution at this time would confuse the issue of the election, and Dr. Clark withdrew his resolution. However, it was pointed out in our discussion that some such provision for a redefinition of the office of President would be included in the recommendations of the Merger Commission which is to be presented to our churches sometime next autumn in preparation for a two-year process of education and discussion, anticipating a vote of the churches of both the Unitarian and Universalist bodies in 1960. A straw vote of the Board indicated general agreement on the importance of this issue, and at one of its later sessions the Board set up a special committee to initiate this study and to make an interim report as soon as possible. This general agreement of the Board influenced its selection of a candidate, which now became the major item on its agenda.

Before the balloting began, it was suggested that we might be guided in our voting by the following considerations. First, the candidate should be a genuine symbol of the integrity of the Unitarian movement as a whole. Second, he should be able to engage with genuine understanding and rapport in two-way communication with all factors and elements in our fellowship. Third, he should be thoroughly competent in the field of administration. Fourth, he should have the capacity positively to interpret Unitarianism to the world, particularly in its relation to other living religious forces and movements. Fifth, we should give careful consideration to the possibility that our failure to select a man with the above qualifications might lead to other nominations by petition, a contested election, and a division of our forces at a time when we should be deeply united. Sixth, since we realize that the next three years for which we were nominating a candidate would be years of transition in which the office should be redefined, we should give careful consideration to the possibility that a minister deeply settled in one of our outstanding churches might be rightly reluctant to surrender his parish for such a position until it became more clearly defined, as the Board felt it should and would probably be by decisions on issues we shall face in these next three years.

We then proceeded with a very thorough discussion of the qualifications and experience of each of the eight men who had been nominated by the Board members, including the names of all those who had been given the highest rating on all the lists submitted to us. Dr. Kuebler led on the first ballot, and had a clear majority on the second ballot. During this balloting the three nominees who received the highest number of votes below those of Dr. Kuebler all withdrew their names. It was then moved that Dr. Kuebler should be nominated by petition on the initiative of the Board. This motion was passed unanimously without any pressure for unanimity.

Reflecting now on the action of the Board, it seems to us to have been singularly without partisanship or the political strategy of self-interest on the part of any person, faction, group, or point of view. This action was taken in the light of the most careful consideration of all the suggestions which had come to us, which we had sought from ministers, laymen, churches, fellowships, Regional Directors and staff. In taking it, we were moved wholly by our disinterested and shared concern for the welfare, vitality and future of our Unitarian movement as a whole. It was a privilege and an honor to have shared in this experience and action of your Board at this critical juncture in the life of Unitarianism in America.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF DR. KUEBLER

In relation to the enclosed Biographical Notes on Dr. Kuebler, there are certain perspectives on his qualifications for this office at this time, which we wish to share with you.

Dr. Kuebler has served our Association and its churches for an unbroken period of twenty-three years. Thoroughly prepared for leadership in the field of religious education, and having proved himself through practical experience in this field in churches of other denominations, he was selected to become Director of Religious Education of the American Unitarian Association in 1935. He accepted this position with us because he believed our Association and churches were ready to accept the fresh, objective approach to religious education which his professional training and experience had taught him to respect and cherish. His fidelity to these standards through these years enabled him to draw into our services some of the outstanding religious educators and specialists in child development in America, including Mrs. Sophia L. Fahs.

Under Dr. Kuebler's leadership our curriculum and program of religious education has become recognized as one of the outstanding achievements in this field in America, and our materials are sought and used by churches in several other Protestant denominations, in the Ethical Cultural Society and in liberal Judaism. As no other development among us in the last quarter century, with the possible exception of the Unitarian Service Committee, this expresses the true genius of our Unitarian movement as a whole and is one of the strongest contributing factors to the extraordinary growth of our churches, fellowships and influence during this period.

Dr. Kuebler is largely responsible for the development of leadership training institutes and assemblies in religious education throughout America, greatly strengthening the substance and leadership of religious education in our churches and fellowships.

It was by no accident that when we initiated our movement for Federal Union with the Universalist Church of America in the Council of Liberal Churches (Universalist-Unitarian), we found that we were already virtually at one in the field of religious education, and that our creative experience in this field became the growing edge of our united movement. It was equally inevitable that Dr. Kuebler should have been appointed Administrator of the C. L. C. when it was established in 1954, covering the fields of Adult Education, Public Information and Publications, as well as Religious Education.

It was recently observed in one of our A. U. A. Board meetings that we had been singularly successful in our program for the religious education of children, as singularly unsuccessful in our program of education for adults, and that we needed, in the period now before us, to concentrate on developing the second to the level of the first. Having led us in the first, and being at home in the second, Dr. Kuebler is well fitted to develop and coordinate both leadership and program in this important field.

Those who have worked closely with Dr. Kuebler have remarked on his ability to elicit initiative and cooperation among persons of widely differing

abilities, skills and points of view. This distinctive quality of leadership among the rapidly proliferating forces of Unitarianism is one of our greatest needs in the period before us. This quality in his leadership may well be the reason why, after fourteen years of experience at headquarters in the field of religious education, he was appointed Executive Vice President of the A. U. A., "being especially assigned to act as the Director of the Division of Churches, the budget officer of the Association and to be concerned with the development of regionalism within the Association and how it should be related to the Board of Directors and the national staff of the A. U. A." His experience of five years in this assignment, before he was appointed to his present position with the C. L. C., affords excellent background for his leadership in the office to which we have now nominated him. Those who worked with him during that period have spoken of his special understanding and skill in reckoning with the issues of regionalism.

We assume that Dr. Kuebler, if elected, will take up the duties of his office with no pre-conceived plan for its re-definition, and with no commitment either for or against Unitarian-Universalist merger. These are open questions which must be considered and decided in the years ahead by all of us throughout the years ahead by all of us throughout the length and breadth of our fellowship. But we do believe that Dr. Kuebler's demonstrated abilities as a leader and administrator in his several fields indicate his unusual qualifications to guide us wisely in reckoning with them.

JOSIAH R. BARTLETT
MRS. HARRY DUNLAP BROWN
LESLIE T. PENNINGTON

APPENDIX 5

April 1, 1958

TO UNITARIAN MINISTERS AND CLERKS OR CHAIRMEN OF CHURCHES AND FELLOWSHIPS:

For your information, four candidates have been nominated by petition for the Presidency of the American Unitarian Association and have accepted the nomination, namely:

- Dr. Thaddeus B. Clark, minister of the First Unitarian Church, St. Louis, Missouri.
- Dr. Dana McL. Greeley, minister of the Arlington Street Church, Boston, Massachusetts.
- The Reverend Donald Harrington, minister of the Community Church (Second Congregational Unitarian Society), New York, New York.
- Dr. Ernest W. Kuebler, General Administrator of the Council of Liberal Churches and Director of the Division of Education, C. L. C., Boston, Massachusetts.

Sincerely yours,

MASON F. MCGINNESS
Executive Administrator

APPENDIX 6

TEXT OF LETTER FROM THADDEUS B. CLARK

April 1, 1958

"I have withdrawn my candidacy for the office of President of the A. U. A. I was an early supporter of Ernest Kuebler and remain so. My concern is the same as his, as I understand it. He sees the next several years as a time for rebuilding and planning. Since this impresses me as the real issue of the moment, and since I feel that Ernest is most able to meet it, I urge his election.

"A denominational commitment to the task of rethinking is surely the most important concern before us now. Without such a commitment we can expect only to dawdle along at a ragged pace and in too many aimless directions. No other issue is really important at this time, and no candidate is important. This is not a time when we should debate the merits of this 'man' or that, but a time when we should clarify our minds on our purposes and hopes. We shall then be able to write the qualifications for the leadership we want, and know with some reason whom we should choose to lead us. At such a time, I should hope we would have an election, and I would trust that it could be an intelligent and informed one. At the moment it could be only distracting and busied with inconsequential whims of personal preference. Viewing the matter thus I would not only not oppose Ernest, but I would not wish to make a contest between candidates that might prejudice our future.

"Some who have supported me urged me to submit my name and then withdraw, if I felt that I should. I must say that I can only see one proper course, which is to withdraw. I should like to make my reasons clear for doing so.

"Many disturbing questions are unsettling us now, only one of which is the matter of merger with the Universalist Church of America. This could mean the end of the A. U. A. as we have known it. More at the heart of our own movement is the growing strength of the regions and local churches, so that we are less clear on the proper role of the national organization. There are many weaknesses in our program, many lacks, and great breakdown in communication and mutual confidence. Testimony to our present impediments is the inability of an A. U. A. capital fund campaign to get off the ground. All Unitarians must become engaged in facing these questions and must join in planning for a growing future. More Unitarians will vote in this election than have voted for years. I just wish that each was voting his personal commitment to give of his best for the task of making more and better Unitarians.

(Signed) THADDEUS B. CLARK

APPENDIX 7

April 11, 1958

To Unitarian Friends:

A spontaneous movement has arisen across the United States and Canada to elect Dana Greeley President of the American Unitarian Association. In the survey conducted by the AUA Board and the Regional Directors, the ministers of the denomination favored Dana Greeley over the nearest contender by a nearly three to one majority. Petitions placing his name in nomination were later received from churches and fellowships in all of the regions. Because of the general force of this mounting demand and considering the important issues involving the welfare of Unitarianism in the years directly ahead, Dana Greeley, after long thoughtfulness, agreed to accept the nomination. Agreeing to run he will not later withdraw.

The major issue at stake is not centered in persons but in policies. The AUA Board, with the support and approval of the Regional Directors, put forward the nomination of its candidate, who was pledged in advance to the announced policy of using the next three years primarily as a time for denominational study, particularly in regard to the possibilities of breaking up the office of the Presidency and separating the role of titular head from that of the "executive function". Thus, if elected by the denomination to the presidential office, the Board-approved nominee would, in effect, already be acting chiefly in behalf of Board policy as its executive director. This could easily leave denominational unity and our overall advance without anyone in our behalf charged with major responsibility for them.

We share with you the confidence that Dana Greeley is the man to be AUA President in this extraordinary period of our expansion. Because of his known integrity, energy and moral courage as a man; because of his proven faith and effectiveness in the use of democratic methods of administration in his famous parish, as President of the Unitarian Service Committee, and in other widely varied organizational offices; because of his intimate knowledge of AUA organization gained in his eight year service as Secretary of the Association we are sure that Dana Greeley will best serve Unitarians and Unitarianism.

This is no time to mark time. Unitarianism is not a patient to be taken to a hospital for serious operation. We are a young and vigorous movement and can move ahead even as we reassess the methods of our reorganization.

Dana Greeley has a talent for bringing all the wealth of our Unitarian diversity into greater cooperative and dynamic potency. The diversity of this initial sponsoring committee and its united faith in Dana Greeley are symbolic of the confidence he has earned and will earn among us as AUA President. We invite you to join us in bringing about his election.

Sincerely,

Joseph Barth, *Chairman*

Robert Raible, *Secretary*

Laurence M. Channing, *Treasurer*

APPENDIX 8

A STATEMENT TO MY FELLOW UNITARIANS

Rev. Donald Harrington

Having withdrawn as a candidate for President of the American Unitarian Association, I feel that I have an obligation to the more than seventy-five churches that sent in nominating petitions on my behalf, and to my fellow Unitarians, to explain why I allowed my name to be presented, and why I have withdrawn.

I consented to run for the presidency because of my life-long concern for our Unitarian movement and my deep interest in its future. Both my wife and I are not only "born Unitarians", but our families on both sides have been part of the Unitarian movement since it came into being, mine in Massachusetts and hers in Transylvania. During my ministries I have taken an active interest in all of our Unitarian problems and activities. How could I fail to respond to a call to leadership with anything other than an eagerness to serve.

I have withdrawn my candidacy because, after careful discussion with many of our leading ministers, I have come to the conclusion that the seven weeks remaining to May Meetings afford inadequate time for the exploration of the issues and a sound sifting of the merits of the various potential candidates. Our movement faces basic reorganization. It needs to appraise itself and to relate both its issues and its needs to its presidential candidates. This cannot be done soundly in seven weeks.

Therefore I am supporting the A.U.A. Board's plan for a three-year period of reappraisal and reorganization. This will give us time to explore the issues, assess our candidates, and make a fruitful, well-considered choice in 1961.

But the attack upon the issues must begin at once. The future will not wait. The crises are already with us. Those of us who are concerned for a dynamic Unitarian future should support the appointment of a new Commission of Appraisal, and should create now an unofficial Committee for Renewed Unitarian Advance to formulate the great questions for which answers must be sought and seek to develop the leadership we shall require.

1. *We are facing major reorganization.* The relationships between the President and Board of Directors, and between the national and regional organizations, must be clarified and redefined. In the process we must not, as some seem to have proposed, decapitate the denomination. Rather, we need a President who has authority with his staff, including a very able Executive Vice President, but who is responsible in all matters of policy and program to his Board of Directors, as they in their turn are responsible to the Annual Meeting and local churches. We need a carefully defined and clearly understood balance between regional responsibility on the one hand and an integrated, united movement with a sharp, incisive national purpose on the other. We are not likely to get this balance and sound reorganization without the representation of the leadership factor supported by our people and churches.

2. *We are approaching the possibility of merger with the Universalists.* But it must be preceded by the most comprehensive discussion of all the issues involved. If it cannot bear extended discussion and debate, it is too hazardous to be attempted. It will not make sense unless it can be accomplished with almost universal enthusiasm and without sacrificing the present forward thrust of our liberal religious movement.
3. *We urgently require a sound, balanced, aggressive capital-fund raising program* for the Association, the theological schools, and for gifts and loans to liberate the enormous potential energies now locked within our newer churches and hundreds of fellowships. It is unfortunately true that during the recent period when capital fund-raising was at its peak in this country, and relatively easy, we Unitarians were spending capital funds accumulated during the 1920's rather than building the new capital needed to undergird our great new advance. The result is financial strain from the top to the bottom of the Unitarian movement, and a failure to be able to take advantage of the many opportunities opening everywhere before us. Our Fellowships and newer churches are not unlike the world's under-developed countries. They require a certain minimal financial undergirding if they are to lift themselves soundly. We are all too often unable to help even when the opportunity is demonstrably sound.
4. *Our religious education program has slowed down.* Curriculum development lags. The Unitarians and Universalists have fewer workers in the field than they had a few years ago. Professional religious education directors are almost impossible to obtain, for we have not been training them. Our whole religious education program needs reinvigoration.
5. *The Division of Publications needs immediate attention.* The Beacon Press faces disaster. Both the Unitarian Register and our basic literature program leave much to be desired. This area needs revitalization and reorganization.
6. *The Unitarian Fellowships need more guidance and help.* Many of them are in difficulties. There seems to be a need of a combination of Religious Education Director-Executive Secretary to help those that have a church potential through their early years until they get on their feet as churches able to call ministers.
7. *The shortage of qualified ministers becomes more drastic each year.* Today there are almost thirty churches without ministers. New methods of recruitment must be found. Perhaps a key to this will lie in the strengthening of our youth program, and especially in the building of a college centers ministry.
8. *The national outreach of the Unitarian movement through use of the media of mass communication,* in which the Laymen's League has pioneered, must be invigorated with extended use of advertising, radio and television. Liberalism's voice is still not heard in this land through the media which reach into every home.

9. Finally, we have an urgent need for an educational program within our churches and fellowships to help us much more freely than heretofore to explore our philosophical differences and to clarify our spiritual goals. We have tended to assume that the lines of division between humanist and theist, naturalist and supernaturalist, christian and universalist, individualist and social actionist were hard and fast. I believe that there is actually a very substantial measure of agreement between these schools of thought, but we will not know it until we have a chance to explore and discuss these problems and to discover it.

These are the crises the Unitarian movement faces.

I am convinced that conditions are ripening for a vast emergence of liberal religion. Everywhere educated people are seeking a free, rational, ethical, socially-applied religion which will meet their spiritual needs without offending their intellectual commonsense. The potential for Unitarianism is enormous. Whether it will be fully realized will depend upon our striking fire, presenting a militantly liberal program, and mustering and organizing the resources necessary to undergird the enormous potential with sound institutional development. This is worth taking time to prepare for.

Those interested in working to spark a renewed Unitarian Advance during the coming period of reorganization are urged to write to Rev. Donald Harrington, 10 Park Ave., N.Y. 16, N.Y.

April 16, 1958

APPENDIX 9

STATEMENT BY

Dr. Carleton M. Fisher, *President, Universalist Church of America*
Judge Lawrence G. Brooks, *Chairman of the Board of Directors*
American Unitarian Association

"Today, the boards of the American Unitarian Association and The Universalist Church of America met together to act on the report of their sub-committee on nominations for the officers of the new Unitarian Universalist Association.

The joint committee recommended for nomination, Dr. Marshall E. Dimock for Moderator, Dr. Dana McLean Greeley for President, for the two positions of Vice-President, Judge Lawrence G. Brooks and Dr. Carleton M. Fisher; for Treasurer, Mrs. Wilson Piper; for Secretary, Mrs. Anne S. Bowman.

On the grounds that he was the best possible nominee, the Board of Directors of the American Unitarian Association strongly supported the nomination of Dr. Greeley now President of the American Unitarian Association, for the new presidency as recommended by the joint sub-committee.

On the principle that neither of the present chief executive officers should be a candidate, the Trustees of the Universalist Church of America placed in

nomination Dr. William B. Rice, minister to the Unitarian Society of Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, and former chairman of the Committee on Consolidation for the two denominations.

After lengthy discussion, both governing bodies agreed to place in nomination both Dr. Greeley and Dr. Rice for the office of the Presidency. Unanimous agreement was reached on all other nominations."

THIS STATEMENT IS MADE BY THE CHAIRMEN OF THE TWO BOARDS AND IS SENT TO YOU BY THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER. OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION TO ALL CHURCHES AND FELLOWSHIPS WILL FOLLOW.

FAUSTUS SOCINUS
IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN SCHOLARSHIP*

JOHN C. GODBEY
The Meadville Theological School

Scholarly research into the life and work of Faustus Socinus has included interesting recent developments. The thorough survey¹ of scholarly work in the field of the "Radical Reformation" by Professor George Huntston Williams, published in *Church History* in March and June, 1958, provides access to a great many materials. The subdivision of the Evangelical Rationalists, however, has a minority of listings. Our present concern is with the single figure of Faustus Socinus, in that subdivision.

An appropriate point of departure for a consideration of recent² scholarly work on Faustus Socinus might well be the work of David Cory, published in 1932.³ This little book gives a brief survey of both the life and the teachings of Socinus. Correlative to this point of departure is the work of Professor Walter Nigg, who published his *Geschichte des Religiösen Liberalismus* in 1937.⁴ In it he devoted a section to Socinianism. He complained of "seine mangelnde religiöse Tiefe," but he acknowledged the tremendous influence of the movement.⁵

Our respected Earl Morse Wilbur devoted three chapters in Volume I of his *History of Unitarianism* to Faustus Socinus.⁶ This short description⁷ is a fine coverage of Socinus' life, but it does not go into his theological views in any depth. The principal theological discussion concerns the *Racovian Catechism*, which was the work of his followers, on the basis of his uncompleted *Christianae Religionis Institutio*.⁸

The famous work by Delio Cantimori, *Eretici Italiani del Cinquecento*,⁹ was translated into German by Werner Kaegi, in 1949, as *Italienische Haeretiker der Spätrenaissance*.¹⁰ This made available to a wider audience an important study, which sets the life and work of Faustus Socinus in the context of the Italian situation in the sixteenth century.

Hans Emil Weber has devoted an important section of Volume II of his *Reformation, Orthodoxie und Rationalismus*¹¹ to Socinianism.

* An address presented before the Unitarian Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois, May 14, 1963.

His discussion is not devoted to Socinus alone, but it presents the views held in general by those who followed him, as "Socinians." Professor Weber has given especial attention to the doctrines of atonement and reconciliation and to the effect of the Socinian attack upon the dogmatic formulations of Protestant orthodoxy.

Giovanni Pioli provided, in 1952, the only study alternative to that of David Cory which is specifically devoted to Socinus. Since his work, *Fausto Socino, Vita – Opere – Fortuna*,¹² was written in Italian, I cannot comment upon it directly. However, Dr. George Huntston Williams described it in his bibliography essay as a "huge but filio-pietistic work," and, he added, "A full modern life and thought of Socinus is a *desideratum*."¹³

Professor George Huntston Williams has provided several items. *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, which was Volume XXV of *The Library of Christian Classics*,¹⁴ did not give primary attention to the Evangelical Rationalists, but the "Bibliography,"¹⁵ listed a number of works by Evangelical Rationalists, including listings under the names of Laelius and Faustus Socinus. He had discussed Socinus in his essay, "Anabaptism and Spiritualism in the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: An Obscure Phase in the Pre-History of Socinianism,"¹⁶ and in his recent book, *The Radical Reformation*.¹⁷ In Part five of the essay he mentions the events attendant upon the coming of Faustus Socinus to Raków and describes the course of development up to and beyond the Raków Synod in 1613. In his definitive work, *The Radical Reformation*, he takes as his *terminus ad quem* 1580, one year after the arrival of Faustus Socinus at Raków. Parts seven and eight of Chapter xxix discuss "Faustus Socinus" and "The Beginnings of Organized Socinianism: The Second Baptismal Controversy in the Minor Church." He discusses the early events of Socinus' life and devotes attention to the essential arguments of *De Jesu Christo Servatore*,¹⁸ the importance of which he thus describes:

The significance of Socinus' theological system and notably of his *De Jesu Christo Servatore*, of 1578, is that it brings to a close the efforts of the Radical Reformation to restate, in departure from traditional formulations, a new doctrine of salvation.

In his Christology, thnetopsychism, and conception of sanctification, Socinus brings together with memorable clarity and baffling simplicity a doctrine to the atonement and justification which (more than any other work thus far discussed) shows how the whole of the

Radical Reformation, in various thrusts and tentative endeavors, differed profoundly from the Magisterial Reformation.¹⁹

He then describes the distinctive features of the Radical Reformation, as contrasted with the Magisterial Reformation, and concludes:

Socinus, reflecting these sectarian views, had in Padua, Florence, and Basel formulated a doctrine of the atonement which may be said to mark the natural closing of the Radical Reformation in one of the main articles of theology.²⁰

Studia Nad Arianizmem, which contains Professor Williams' essay, also contains a number of other essays contributing to Socinus research. These have been only accessible to me through the English summaries. Among these essays are Ludwik Chmaj, "The Racow Lectures of Faustus Socinus,"²¹ Zbigniew Ogonowski, "The Faith and Reason in the Religious Doctrines of the Socinians and John Locke,"²² and Ludwik Chmaj gives us two letters of Faustus Socinus, one to Andreas Woidowski, and one to Valentine Radecki.²³

Mrs. Frederick W. (Phyllis-Anne) Steinberg won the first Earl Morse Wilbur Prize, in 1960, with an essay entitled "The Theological Breakthroughs of Faustus Socinus." In this essay, she explored the background of Socinus' thought and asserted that he is responsible for two genuine theological breakthroughs. First, Socinus began with man, rather than with God, in theological thinking, by inquiring into the nature of human nature.²⁴ Second, Socinus maintained that "God changes," and hence sought to solve the age-old dilemma of divine sovereignty and human freedom. This involves divine knowledge, which only comprises the results of human actions after the actions.²⁵ Finally, she assessed Socinian influence in the modern world and asserted that, logically extended, Socinian thought would lead to panentheism.

Professor Ludwik Chmaj has edited a two-volume edition of the letters of Faustus Socinus, which includes many letters hitherto unrecovered.²⁶ Joseph Alen, who reviewed this edition for *Church History*, stated: "This volume of the letters of Faust Socyn is a valuable source of historical documentation of the reformation. It reveals a true picture of the religious ideas in Polish territory, which was the cradleland of the free religious movement which is today called Unitarianism."²⁷

Antal Pirnát has presented the relationships of Faustus Socinus to Francis Dávid, and the developments in Transylvania, in *Die Ideologie der Siebenburger Antitrinitarier in den 1570^{er} Jahren*.²⁸

Incidentally, it is interesting to note that *The Hibbert Journal* has recently printed a photograph of a painting of Faustus Socinus, made "from an original here [Siena] by Titian."²⁹

Finally, E. J. Brill, the Leiden publishing house, states in its January 1963 catalogue that they now have in press, for 1962, Fascicule IV, and in preparation, for 1963, Fascicule V, of the *Bibliographie de la Réforme: Ouvrages Parus de 1940 à 1955*. These should be quite useful aids, for Fascicule IV will cover France, Great Britain, and Switzerland, and Fascicule V will cover Poland.³⁰

In the brief survey above, I have mentioned some of the more important recent scholarly studies of the life and work of Faustus Socinus. I do not claim that the listing is complete; it is intended to indicate what types of work have been, and are being, done.

Now I turn to the main part of this address, a presentation of some of the work in which I am now engaged, in the process of beginning my doctoral dissertation, "The Transformation of Socinianism in Relation to the Doctrine of the Atonement." This is not, however, a presentation of the results of the dissertation, for I am by no means at that stage. The orientation from which I work is as follows. The Socinian theology has three focal points of attack, which have influenced the structure of the Socinian theological system. These are the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of Christology as formulated at the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon, and the satisfaction and penal theories of the atonement. I believe that we can, and we should, entertain the hypothesis that at least some of the truth was on the orthodox side of the issues. The doctrine of the Trinity may, perhaps, be able to be made intelligible by a more careful analysis of such concepts as *περιχώρησις*, "coinherence."³¹ The doctrine of Christology may, perhaps, be able to be made intelligible by the adoption of a new metaphysical framework, thus getting away from the metaphysics that required Christology to be thought of in terms of two natures. However, it seems to me that these were, for the Socinians, secondary points of attack. I believe that opposition to the satisfaction and penal theories of the atonement formed the nerve center, the central focus of the Socinian theology. This is to say that opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity and to the Chalcedonian Christology is a result of thinking from the standpoint of opposition to these formulations of the doctrine of the atonement. In my future research, I hope to examine Socinianism in relation to the doctrine of the atonement from this perspective. Thus, if, in the second and third generations after the death

of Faustus Socinus, the Socinians came to a new understanding of the nature of the atonement, this change will have effected, at least implicitly, a restructuring of the entire Socinian theological system, for, by implication, both the Trinity and Christology will have to be reappraised.

This morning, however, our attention is to be directed to an understanding of this Socinian opposition to the satisfaction and penal theories of the atonement. The doctrine of the atonement is a special aspect of the doctrine of the Work of Christ. It should be noted, at the outset, that there has never been an ecclesiastically-defined dogma of the Work of Christ, whereas, the ecclesiastical dogma of the Person of Christ was defined relatively early in the history of the church. Nevertheless, a relatively specific doctrine of the Work of Christ was prevalent in the Continental Reformation at the time of the rise of Socinianism.

All theological thought on the doctrine of the Work of Christ must properly begin with the Old and New Testaments. A doctrine of the atonement emerges as an attempt to formulate an intelligible understanding of that good emergent into human life in the life and work of Jesus Christ. In some form, it represents a reckoning with, and overcoming of, the problem of evil, particularly of human sin. There have been several types of formulations which have appeared in the course of the history of Christian thought. For nearly nine hundred years, until Anselm of Canterbury, what is known as the "ransom" theory enjoyed tremendous influence. This view, of which Origen (d. A.D. 255) is an eminent representative, maintained that Christ gave his life as the price that the devil required if he would release men, who were in his power because of their sins. Gustaf Aulén has argued forcibly that, in the period of the early church, and well into the middle ages, a "classic" theory was held by many. This view says that, through Jesus Christ, God engaged in combat with cosmic forces of evil, overcame them, and thus released man from the bondage that resulted from his sin. Irenaeus (d. c. A.D. 180) is an eminent representative of this view in the early church, and Aulén argues that Luther regained it and employed it with great power.³² Irenaeus is also, rightly, famous for his "recapitulation" theory. He regarded all mankind as bound up closely with Christ, so that whatever Christ achieved would, by this solidarity, become the possession of all men. Thus, Christ was born into this world, and, in Irenaeus' words: "Wherefore also he passed through every stage of life restoring to all communion with God."³³ Athanasius (d. A.D. 373) is an excellent representative of a view which has had tremendous influence in the Eastern Church. This view maintains that man, as a crea-

ture, tends by nature to corruption and nothingness. The Logos, the divine Word, was given to men and thus brought men reality, life, and would ultimately bring immortality. But men broke the Law, lost the Logos, and began to return to their natural corruption. Death became a punishment; moreover, men became blinded by sin. Therefore, God sent the Logos, Who appeared in a human body, restored life to the body, paid the debt of death, healed the corruption, and gave men the promise of immortality.

At the beginning of the twelfth century, Anselm of Canterbury (d. A.D. 1109) marked a decisive turning point in the history of the doctrine of the Work of Christ by the systematization of a "satisfaction" theory in his famous work, *Cur Deus Homo*?³⁴ He rejects the recapitulation theory of Irenaeus, the "ransom" theory, the "classic" theory of conquering the devil, and the theory that Christ died to show to us God's love for us. Anselm wishes to demonstrate, rationally, the necessity of the incarnation and of the death of Christ. This is really a revolutionary view. In his complex argument, he states that men are made for eternal blessedness, but cannot attain to it without the remission of their sins. They have infinitely offended God's honor by sin, and must either make satisfaction, or suffer the punishment of eternal death. However, they cannot make satisfaction, because they are finite, and, thus, cannot perform an infinite satisfaction, and because they have, through sin, lost the power to perform righteous deeds. Therefore, the God-Man must appear, who, as a man, performs what man ought to do, and, as God, he is able to do so. This God-Man makes satisfaction and frees men from the alternative of punishment. This action opens the way for God to forgive sin, so that men can attain to eternal blessedness.

This view was opposed by the famous theory of Abelard (d. A.D. 1142), which is sometimes rather loosely termed the "moral influence" theory of the atonement. There are two principal features in his view. The passion of Christ results, first, in the forgiveness of sins, and second, in what Abelard terms the "liberty of the sons of God," which means that Christ's love and obedience awaken in us an answering love for Him and for God. Thus, the display of God's love awakens love in man.³⁵

In the period of the Reformation the influence of Anselm was increased, but it was modified. Briefly, one may say that Anselm's dictum "satisfaction or punishment," was modified into "satisfaction as punishment." This has been termed the "penal" theory of the atonement. From the

standpoint of legal justice, the death of Christ was regarded as the legal penalty for man's sin. There was a distinct tendency to attempt to be quite rigorous in presenting the legal equivalence of man's sin and Christ's satisfactory punishment. It would probably be fair to say that this theory did not quite have the prominence in the views of Luther and Calvin that Socinus seems, at some points, to imply; nevertheless, the view rapidly gained very wide influence. In Socinus' generation a point of view was developing which is now called Protestant Scholasticism. The "penal" formulation of the doctrine of the atonement was a cardinal point in the theological views of Protestant Scholasticism. Professor L. W. Grensted has given us a succinct example of its presence in the statement of the Reformed theologian, Francis Turretin.

The satisfaction which is here discussed is not regarded in a broad sense . . . but strictly as the payment of a debt, by which that is paid which another owes and by which satisfaction is made to the creditor claiming a debt or to the judge claiming punishment.³⁶

This passage expresses the language and tendencies in the point of view which Faustus Socinus opposed. His work in relation to the doctrine of the Work of Christ should be viewed in this broad context.

Faustus Socinus' principal work on the doctrine of the atonement is *De Jesu Christo Servatore*, which we have mentioned. Professor George Huntston Williams has made readily accessible to all a brief description of the historical situation in which this work appeared. In his discussion in *The Radical Reformation* he says:

Socinus . . . wrote out his convictions about the resurrection of the righteous, dependent no doubt on Renato and mediated perhaps by his uncle Laelius (Ch. 24.2.c.), and gave the paper to one Jerome Marlian, declaring his readiness to debate the issue. At the request of Marlian, one John Baptist Rota from Padua, later pastor of a conventicle there, went on to Geneva with Socinus' paper and failed to return it.³⁷

Dr. Williams describes the interruption occasioned by the writing of *De statu primi hominis ante lapsum*, and then continues:

During this period Jacques Couvet, pastor of the Huguenot Church in Paris, became one of Socinus' antagonists, when he heard that the traditional doctrines of the atonement and of immortality were being denied. Socinus, at the request of Couvet, obligingly wrote out his thoughts. Couvet replied after a few weeks. Whereupon Socinus sent to Paris the manuscript of *De Jesu Christo servatore*, finished 12 July 1578.³⁸

We may add to this information given in the "Introduction," written in 1594, concerning the circumstances that led to the publication of the essay years after its completion. Apparently without Socinus' knowledge, someone had given a printer Socinus' "*Disputationem meam de loco sept. capitis epist. ad Romanos.*"³⁹ It was published with the name of Prosper Dysidaeus as the author. In this writing, the *De Jesu Christo Servatore* was mentioned.⁴⁰ Elias Arcessevius secured a copy of the letter, persuaded Socinus to recognize it as his, to divide it into chapters and arguments, and to consent to its publication.⁴¹

De Jesu Christo Servatore consists of four parts. Professor Robert S. Franks has presented a brief, nine-page overview of the argument of the work in his *The Work of Christ*. At the conclusion, he says: "The above abstract, however, only gives an imperfect conception of the work of Socinus, which must be studied in detail, if its full force is to be felt."⁴² I shall attempt to give you a few examples of its force.

The relationship of the four parts to the course of Socinus' argument is as follows. Part One, consisting of eight chapters, has as its purpose the refutation of the arguments which Couvet had sought to draw from Scripture to support his own view and to oppose Socinus. Part Two, consisting of twenty-six chapters, replies to the testimonies that Couvet selected from Scripture to support his view. Part Three, having eleven chapters, presents arguments to refute Couvet, in his contention that Jesus Christ, by his death, made satisfaction for our sins to God or to God's justice. Part Four, with fourteen chapters, considers certain important questions that Couvet appended to his main arguments. Here, as Professor Franks says:

Socinus criticises the Protestant doctrine of the imputation of Christ's satisfaction through faith, [and] . . . seeks to show that his and not the orthodox is the Scriptural view of justification by faith.⁴³

I shall now examine some representative arguments that Socinus employed against the satisfaction and penal formulations of the doctrine of the atonement. The area of our discussion will be restricted to the beginning sections of Part Three. At each stage of his attack, Socinus provides a whole battery of arguments. I have examined these, and have selected from each stage of this part of his attack one or two of the most representative of these arguments. When I have stated these, as illustrations of Socinus' point of view and method, I shall then comment upon his approach and method, his apparent success, and his influence.

In Part Three, Socinus endeavors to prove false Couvet's proposition, namely, "that Jesus Christ by his death made satisfaction for our sins to God or to His justice."⁴⁴ Couvet alleged that the reason why Socinus rejected the concept of satisfaction was because he thought that God's mercy was sufficient to save us without satisfaction. Socinus proudly admits that this is true, and states the programmatic aim of this Part Three.

Nor would I ever do so great injury to my God that I should dare to think, even through a dream, that He either did not wish or would not be able with right to forgive my sins to me, when no real satisfaction had been received for them. But, in order that the truth of my assertion may shine forth more [clearly], first, it ought to be proven that God was able to forgive our sins with right, when no true satisfaction for them had been received from any person, or in any way. Next, it will be demonstrated that He wished to do this. When this has been done, finally, I shall make plain that Christ was not able to make satisfaction to divine justice for our sins, either by his death or in any other manner. And thus, the good God [so] favoring, it will be established that that which my two propositions contain, and which you believe that you have shown is most alien from truth, is most true, [namely], that Christ did not make satisfaction to divine justice for our sins, and, that it was not necessary that he should make satisfaction.⁴⁵

Chapter one begins this programmatic attack, under the announced title, "God was able to forgive our sins to us with right, although no true satisfaction had been received for them."⁴⁶

If God would rightfully forgive our sins which, as offenses to the divine majesty require satisfaction, although no true satisfaction was made for them, He must then yield His legal right. Such yielding of one's legal right is lawful for anyone, as much as one desires; hence, it is entirely within God's right and power to do so, and, consequently, to forgive sins without receiving satisfaction. The central concept at this point is God's utter sovereignty.

Wherefore, God, in punishing or absolving sins, ought not to be considered just as some judge who deals with the law of another, and to whom it would not be lawful to yield from the prescription of the Laws, but as a lord and prince, whose will alone, since [the question] by right concerns only this, is the Law and most perfect norm of all things.⁴⁷

Moreover, men who forgive freely, without exacting satisfaction, are highly praised; it is not unheard-of sacrilege to dare to deny this power to God? Now, we are in the relation to God of debtors to a creditor, because of

our sins, which Scripture calls debts, or "*aes alienum*." Any creditor can forgive a debtor either part of, or the whole of, his debt, and so can God.

Socinus now anticipates an obvious objection of Couvet, which is, at least in its intention, almost straight out of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*?

But you say that it is necessary that God should take care to have satisfaction made to his justice, (for) which He is not able to renounce unless He, so to speak, denies Himself.⁴⁸

Socinus now recapitulates the essential features of an extremely important analysis, in Part One, of the relation of the divine attributes to God's nature and His will. The justice that Couvet claims makes satisfaction absolutely necessary does not, Socinus says, reside in God by nature, but it is "an effect of His will." This is quite clear, for, if it did reside in God, "He would never forgive anyone, not even the smallest sin. For God never does, nor is [He] able to do, anything which opposes the attributes that reside in Him." Such unfailing attributes are, for instance, wisdom and equity; God never acts unwisely or unfairly. Thus, there is in God's nature an attribute which can be called Rectitude or Equity, which always characterizes God; by it He punishes incorrigibly impenitent sinners. It is not specifically opposed to mercy, but it is opposed to wickedness and inequity. Hence, God may be no less just in "exercising mercy" than in "avenging injuries."⁴⁹ On the other hand, there also exists a punitive justice, dependent upon God's will, which we may term "voluntary justice." In Scripture it is called "sternness," "vengeance," "wrath," "indignation," or "passion." It is specifically opposed to mercy. It has two modes. In one mode, God always employs it to destroy wicked men; in another mode, He sometimes punishes repentant sinners who are not completely wicked, for repentance is not expected from them.

In a similar way, there is in God's nature an attribute of mercy whose broad meaning requires the name of "Goodness" or "Beneficence." This mercy is not specifically opposed to Rectitude or Equity.

For it embraces all beneficence of God; it may be exercised by Him either in forgiving sins, or in giving any kind of blessing whatever to men.⁵⁰

There is, also, a mercy, as an effect of His will, which we may term "voluntary mercy." This "voluntary mercy" is specifically opposed to "voluntary justice." It, also, has two modes. In one mode, God always forgives repentant sinners and gives them salvation and life; in the other

mode, God sometimes "prevents men, and, by grace, He calls and draws them from sins, and offers to them forgiveness and salvation."⁵¹

Neither of these two modes of God's "voluntary justice," which is opposed to mercy, is able to be perfectly employed, together with the corresponding mode of "voluntary mercy" to which it is opposed, in the same subject at the same time. This follows from the very character of these attributes as opposites. Hence, the first mode of this justice, relating to an unrepentant man, is opposed to the mode of mercy that requires a different subject, namely, a repentant person. In this case, the very effects are opposite: justice condemns and punishes, mercy spares and saves. The second mode of this justice, and the second mode of this mercy, both can relate to the same subject, but not at the same time, for they have opposite effects. Thus, this mode of "voluntary justice" may punish an unrepentant person, and it is thus opposed to the mode of "voluntary mercy" that may offer to that person grace and forgiveness.⁵²

One of Socinus' principal objectives in this analysis is to present the theological foundation for his opposition to the view of orthodox theologians that God can, and does, at the same time, employ both that justice and that mercy which are inherent as His genuine attributes. A second principal objective is to demonstrate that there is no justice residing in God as a genuine attribute that requires that sinners should be punished; therefore, satisfaction for our sins is not strictly necessary for our sins to be able to be forgiven. The "justice" that is the focal point of his entire debate with Couvet is the "voluntary justice" in its two modes, dependent upon the exercise of the divine will.

On the basis of the above analysis, and of the assertion that God is "a lord and prince whose will alone . . . is the Law and most perfect norm of all things,"⁵³ Socinus develops at length a very important argument, which may be summarized as follows. Couvet argued that God's justice must be enjoyed to punish sinners exactly by the principle of "*Suum cuique tribuendum esse*," "to each ought to be assigned that which is his own."⁵⁴ This means that punishment is owed to sinners. Socinus replies that the question is not one of granting that which is due to the sinners, but of granting that which is due to the source of the law. A judge may not fail to assign to a criminal his deserved punishment, because, in so doing, he would fail to give to the law that which is its due. It is the concern of the source of the law that criminals should be

punished, and for that very reason the judge received his authority. Again, this judge may not condemn an innocent person, and it may be better to absolve a criminal than to condemn one who is innocent; otherwise, both the innocent person is afflicted and fails to receive his due, and the law fails to receive its due, for it is the concern of the law to protect innocent persons. Now, God is the source of the divine Law, not merely a delegated judge. Hence, He may forgive and spare sinners, because, in so doing, He only yields from His own legal right and does no harm to anyone else. Again, princes and kings may be unjust in forgiving criminals, for thereby they not only ignore the interest of others who wish the criminals punished, but they also violate their own law, and they violate the Law of God, Who gave them power so that criminals might be punished. But in the case of God, only His own Law is involved.

Socinus is now able to draw the conclusion for which he has been arguing: "Therefore God is able, with right, to forgive sins to us, although no satisfaction has been received for them from anyone." He now goes one step further, and asserts that, in a certain sense, God not only may forgive repentant persons, but He ought to do so. It is important to note that Socinus emphasizes that God only forgives those who are repentant. He says that "God from the very beginning of the world both ordained that He would give forgiveness liberally to those who repent, and He sealed this [decree] with a kind of silent law."⁵⁵ Now, if God did not forgive repentant persons, He would violate His own decree and law. Prior to this decree and law, only the sole will of God was the ground of forgiveness even to those who repent; after this decree and law, however, God's beneficence and equity, which are His inherent attributes, require that He not "defraud" repentant persons of forgiveness.

Socinus then concludes that God's unique, unheard-of liberality manifested through Christ is seen not only in forgiveness granted to repentant persons, but also in God's efforts to draw us from sin to penitence, by placing great rewards before us. God's goodness is active. Socinus now has completed the first step in his programmatic attack upon the satisfaction theory, by proving that God could, with right, forgive sins without having received satisfaction. He now turns to the second step.

In Chapter two, Socinus seeks to prove that God did, in fact, will to forgive our sins, without receiving satisfaction. This requires a rather lengthy argument, which I abbreviate below. In the first place, God's forgiveness is not unconditional. Purity and innocence, either now or at some time in the future, are required of those whom He forgives. What

Socinus means by this is shown by his distinction between sinners who occasionally sin, but who are not wholly given to sin, and sinners who are given to some great sin, or who are so greatly given to sin, that they greatly oppose His will. If the former class of sinners repent, and change their ways, God does not impute their sins to their account, for their obedience manifests a faith that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). The sins of those in the second class are, however, not forgiven.

Socinus illustrates this view with examples of God's goodness apart from Christ, and, again, through Christ. One example of God's goodness apart from Christ is the case of Cain and Abel. In Matthew 25:35, from Christ himself, and in Hebrews 11:4, we learn that Abel was righteous. No one is or can be righteous unless his sins are forgiven by God. Since no one dares to affirm that Abel never sinned, one must assume that God forgave Abel his sins. Was this forgiveness of his sins "because Jesus Christ had once made satisfaction for them to divine justice, and Abel himself believed this?"⁵⁶ Socinus ridicules the idea; the satisfaction theory can hardly account for such a case. Rather, God forgave Abel and Enoch their sins and accounted them righteous before Him, because, as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, they believed that God is, and that He rewards those who do His will. In the case of Cain, whose works were evil, God voluntarily offers and promises forgiveness if Cain will repent; satisfaction has nothing to do with the case. Thus, Socinus has clearly illustrated his meaning: "Now in those whose sins He either forgives, or is going to forgive, He requires purity and innocence of life, either now in the present, as in Abel, or [He forgives] those sins in some [time] which follows, as in Cain."⁵⁷ For Socinus, then, righteousness includes obedience; it does not mean belief "that satisfaction is either going to be made to God by Christ at some time or other for his sins, or that it has already been made, nor [did I understand it to mean] that innocence and purity of life originate from this, that he so believes."⁵⁸

When Socinus has discussed examples of God's beneficence apart from Christ, he then turns to a consideration of whether or not God wishes to exercise this same beneficence toward us through Christ, and whether He, in fact, does so. In the first place, he states his thesis:

That, in the salvation imparted to us by divine providence through Christ, God did not will to receive any true satisfaction for our sins from anyone, but that He most liberally forgave them all to us who were penitents and who repented.⁵⁹

To establish this thesis, he considers two questions. First, what did

God promise that He was going to accomplish through Christ? Second, since God decreed that He would confirm the New Covenant with us through Christ, what was this New Covenant going to require of us?

The answer to this first question is that God promised that, through Christ, He was going to confirm a New Covenant with us. Jeremiah 31 gives us a clear insight into Socinus' meaning. The new divine covenant, which will be written upon men's hearts, will have such force "that both the will and the powers would be produced through it in human minds for obeying the divine law, which is sufficient to attain to the most full forgiveness of sins."⁶⁰ This is, he says, clear, from the order of Jeremiah's words; the inscribing of the laws upon men's hearts precedes the remission of sins. Men will receive forgiveness because the divine law has been inscribed upon their hearts. Socinus explicitly states that the inscribing of the divine law upon men's hearts is identical with repentance. If this repentance is present, God will remit our sins to us in the New Covenant without satisfaction. This He does through Christ. The words of the prophet were: "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."⁶¹ Socinus argues, at length, that the concept of satisfaction is excluded by this promise.

Couvet might object to this that Socinus misconceives "what God promised that He was going to accomplish through Christ." Rather, Couvet would say, the correct statement would be "that when He was able, with right, to punish us, He did not wish to do it; but, having released us unpunished, He most severely smote His son for us."⁶² Socinus replies that this position might be regarded as consistent with divine generosity and liberality if it were necessary for our sins to be punished in some manner. However, his prior arguments have disproved this necessity; God can, rightfully, forgive our sins, and, in a certain sense, He ought to do so. Couvet's view makes God similar to a king who had many of his subjects in his debt. The debt was so great that the king could not collect it without destroying his subjects, and hence, his kingdom, completely. Therefore, he compelled a certain rich man in his kingdom, who owed him nothing, to pay the entire debt, or, he at least permitted him to pay it. Such a king would be called hard and grasping; he could easily have forgiven the entire debt and thus have retained his kingdom. His wealth was already so great that he did not need the money. If God is like this, He is villainous.

For what would be more unworthy than that He, Who is most dear to you, with no necessity, should inflict the most severe punishment and should exact from him, when he was innocent, punishment for their offenses, which He was able, absolutely, with right, to forgive?⁶³

Rather, God should show and does show the true beneficence and liberality that not only forgives the debt because it is convenient to Him to do so, but by which so to speak, He, as a creditor, gives the sum of money owed to the debtor, depriving Himself of it. God voluntarily deprives Himself of the satisfaction. Clearly, Socinus has answered Couvet's claim that God "most severely smote His Son for us." Such punishment, as satisfaction, was not necessary, and it would contradict God's acknowledged attributes.

The answer to the second question is that "God required nothing besides our penitence from us in order that we might attain to the remission of sins offered to us in the New Covenant."⁶⁴ This penitence must be followed by, and thus attested by, true correction of life and obedience. Penitence does not depend upon, nor arise from, any satisfaction.

The answering of these two questions provides the establishing of Socinus' thesis in this chapter, which is that God did not wish to receive satisfaction, but that He freely forgives the sins of all repentant persons. He then considers a series of arguments having to do with the relationship of the remission of sins to satisfaction. Remission of sins is considered both under the rubric of remitting a debt and of forgiving a transgression. In this series of arguments he seeks to establish the following conclusions. First, remission of sins and true satisfaction are genuine contraries. Second, if his opponent argues that remission preceded satisfaction, he contradicts himself. Third, it is impossible for remission and satisfaction to be accomplished at the same time. Fourth, a debt cannot be properly exacted except from the one who owes it. Fifth, if Christ transferred the entire debt to himself, this is not liberation, but what the lawyers term novation. In such a case there has been no remission, the debtor is simply changed. Remission is the complete abolishing of all obligation, voluntarily, by the creditor. Sixth, remission is the Biblical term, and deserves attention.

Remission has two parts. The one [part] is that he who owes is absolved from this obligation; the other [part] is that he to whom it is owed does not will to have satisfaction made to him. If either one of these parts is absent, there is no remission.⁶⁵

Seventh, the two primary verbs employed in the New Testament in these passages are *χαρίζομαι*, employed in the sense of "to forgive," and *ἀφίημι*, employed in the sense of "to remit." The former is the more crucial, for it expresses greater liberality. Eighth, it is incorrect to say that God gave Christ to us, so that we might, so to speak, pay

Christ back to God as satisfaction for our sins. In this case there was no necessity for payment in such a roundabout way; God could simply forgive the sins. Moreover, remission of sins is a fact in itself, issuing from the divine goodness. It is not a result of the fact that Christ was given to us. Christ's death is a demonstration of the goodness of God, rather than, in any sense, a payment of satisfaction.

Therefore Christ was not given to us by God so that our debt, which we had contracted by sinning, might be discharged by the payment of this Christ: but that, as those who have faith in his words, we might be made participators in this greatest divine liberality.⁶⁶

The death of Christ took place as a means whereby we enjoy the benefits of the forgiveness of sins.

For, as was abundantly explained by us, if such a death of Jesus Christ did not intervene, this gracious forgiveness of sins, which God truly did not wish to occur without a certain precedent extraordinary obedience, would have been absolutely empty and vain.⁶⁷

I digress a moment at this point in summarizing the results of these arguments, because a very interesting item appears here. What does Socinus mean by describing the death of Jesus Christ as "a certain precedent extraordinary obedience" which God required? Without it, he says, the forgiveness of sins would be "empty and vain." Socinus promises to explain this more fully later, but I have not yet reached any such point. It will be most interesting to see what he has to say, for it appears to me that precisely here he is in danger of giving his entire case away. So far as I have been able to determine, neither Fock, nor Hamack, nor Kühler, nor Franks, nor Weber, nor anyone else has noted this. The thing that most interests me is, did Gerhard, the Lutheran, or Turretin, the Reformed, find it? If they did, what did they do with it? I don't know the answer to this yet. But now, I continue with the summarization of the conclusions of arguments.

Ninth, we must recognize that, although many men profess to believe in and to follow Christ, in fact they do not. The cause of this is their own wickedness. We may be quite sure that God forgives only the sins of those who are truly penitent, and who seek to live a life obedient to God's will.

Since he has completed this step in his argument, Socinus now proceeds to the third stage of his programmatic attack upon the satisfaction theory.

In Chapter three, Socinus seeks to demonstrate that satisfaction for

our sins, seriously meant, is impossible unless we ourselves die. He begins by stating concisely his thesis:

If God either was not able, or did not wish, to forgive us without some true satisfaction for our sins, we ourselves absolutely ought to make satisfaction to Him. For there is nothing that we owe to God which someone else, who has, indeed, not sinned, and thus, himself, owes nothing to divine justice, is able to perform for us.⁶⁸

This latter sentence explicitly opposes the essential, substitutionary principle of the satisfaction theory. Socinus now begins his argument.

His first step is to demonstrate that God's nature is such that, if He really required satisfaction, He could not accept a substitute. According to the will of God, sin is to be punished by eternal death. Eternal death is a corporal punishment that no one may endure for another. Monetary punishments may, of course, be performed by a substitute, and in such cases the money paid is properly regarded as if it were actually the debtor's own money. Corporal punishments, however, require the sufferings of this specific person; neither law nor custom recognize a valid substitute in such cases. Innocent persons, do, indeed, sometimes suffer because men are blinded by wrath and cannot wreak their vengeance on the true criminal, but the validity of these actions is not recognized. What, in fact, this substitutionary principle requires is that men should, knowingly and willingly, release the actual criminal and then punish some innocent person. In fact, men have not done and will not do such a thing. Such an action, then, is unthinkable for God; neither that Rectitude (or Equity) which resides in His nature, nor that severity (or vengeance) which is an effect of His will, can be the basis of such an act.

The defenders of the satisfaction theory attribute such an action to God and seek to defend "this outrage" by the example of a certain king. Socinus thinks they refer to Zaleucus of the Locrians.⁶⁹ At any rate, this king had a son who had committed some crime. A law, which the father himself had proposed, required that the punishment for this crime should be the loss of both eyes. In order to satisfy the law, and still not to have a blind son, the father took one eye from the son and one from himself.

Socinus is quite severe in his criticism of this example, as a justification for the concept of God as requiring satisfaction in the form of Christ's death. In the first place, such an act should be censured, for the father neither spared his son nor did he fulfill the law; he mutilated

his son, broke the law, and was "stupidly cruel" to himself. Even more severe censure arises from the fact that he permitted his love of his son to move him to use such an "absurd and iniquitous" means of trying to satisfy the law. He deserves to be punished for this, "except that we think that he, himself, sufficiently inflicted a grave punishment on himself by his stupidity."⁷⁰ In the second place, this example really has nothing to do with the question. Neither the men themselves who sinned, nor God, Himself, Who decreed punishment for sin, was punished. Men do not correspond to the son, nor does God correspond to the king. Punishment was inflicted on Christ, an innocent man, and this innocent man was not, Socinus says, "conjoined with criminal men to such an extent that the punishments which he underwent should be able to be called his own."⁷¹

It must be emphasized that God does not recede from His Equity. Both reason and Scripture proclaim this, and this means that the punishment that one person owes cannot be, and ought not to be, paid by another. Among many instances from Scripture, one may cite Ezekiel 18:20.

The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father for the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

It is unthinkable for God to punish an innocent man for others' crimes. God is the very source of equity and rectitude; to accuse Him of such a crime is blasphemy. Indeed, God is thus charged with "extreme ignorance and folly," for two reasons. On the one hand, if God wished to exercise mercy toward the human race, why did He not graciously forgive man, as He was able to do? On the other hand, if God wished to exercise vengeance and severity toward the human race, why did He not punish men themselves, as, again, He was able to do?

After a further elaboration of this point, Socinus proceeds to the second step, which is to demonstrate the proper and sufficient substitutes cannot, in any case, be found. True satisfaction would be the full payment of the debt, which is eternal death for each one of us. If we do not pay this, each one of us would have to find someone to pay it for him. Everyone owes eternal death for himself, so not even one person can, thus, be saved. Moreover, if one man had not sinned and did not owe eternal death for himself, he could make satisfaction for, at most, one other man. All other men must perish, unless an equal number of sinless men can be found who will die for them. Nevertheless, corporal punish-

ment such as eternal death cannot, in the very nature of the case, be suffered by one man for another. All sinful men must perish.

Socinus elaborates this argument at length. The substance of these elaborations is devoted to a refutation of variations of orthodox rebuttals to his argument and to a preliminary demonstration that the obedience of one man cannot, properly, be imputed to another. He will argue this latter point in more detail later.

Socinus has, thus, demonstrated the third step in his case, namely, that satisfaction for our sins, seriously meant, means that every one of us must die. Substitutionary satisfaction is really impossible, if seriously taken on the terms of the satisfaction theory. He now proceeds to a consideration of what form of satisfaction Christ might, conceivably, have been able to make.

In Chapter four, Socinus argues that Christ was not able to make satisfaction for our sins by the payment of the punishments which the law of God required us to undergo. He has demonstrated that it is impossible, in principle, for one man to make satisfaction for another, either by enduring the punishments the other man owed, or by the performance of those acts of obedience to the divine law to which the other man is obligated. It is, then, impossible for Christ to make perfect satisfaction for us.

Now, some orthodox theologians have argued that this was possible because of something unique in the person of Jesus Christ. This Socinus rejects. He says:

For those things which, by their very nature, are in no way possible, can never be done by anyone, not even by God Himself. And of such kind, at least in part, are those things that necessarily would have to have been done in either kind of satisfaction.⁷²

Moreover, orthodox theologians are very wrong when they attempt to defend their view by saying that God might have regarded Christ's satisfaction as sufficient. The decree of God and His own self-consistency exclude the very possibility of an untrue satisfaction for our sins being regarded by God as a true satisfaction.

In his earlier discussion he has shown that the punishment that each of us ought to undergo for his sins is eternal death. Socinus' thesis is this:

Precisely this Christ did not undergo, and, if he had undergone it, all our salvation would have been utterly taken away, both the hope of and

the reason for liberation from death for our sins.⁷³

As Paul said, if Christ has not risen from the dead, our preaching of the Gospel is vain, and we are still in our sins.⁷⁴ But, according to the satisfaction theory, if Christ saved us by enduring the punishments which we owed, he should never have arisen from death.

He next refutes, as being quite inconsistent, various orthodox objections to such a strict interpretation of the satisfaction theory. One of his main concerns, to which he devotes considerable detail, is to demonstrate, first, that we cannot prove from the resurrection that Christ raised himself up from the dead by his own power and, second, that the resurrection does not prove Christ to be eternal God, so that Christ had, in himself, the power of making satisfaction for our sins.

Socinus vigorously rejects orthodox intimations that he is not really interested in the resurrection. The meaning of the resurrection is in its reference to immortality. In Acts 13:33, in the midst of his speech at Antioch of Pisidia, Paul referred to the words of the second Psalm.

Thou art my Son
today have I begotten thee.⁷⁵

Paul quite specifically relates these words to Christ's resurrection. Socinus believes that this is important.

For then was Christ truly and absolutely constituted the son of God, when he attained to immortality, and that supreme power which Paul, as in the custom of Sacred Writers, understands by the word "Resurrection."⁷⁶

The resurrection of Christ is essential, for by it Christ was constituted the son of God with power to give to us eternal life. It does more than this. It destroys the satisfaction theory, by demonstrating that Christ did not pay that debt of eternal death which we owed; indeed, Christ himself was given eternal life.

Socinus rejects the argument that the "dignity" of Christ's person made him a special case, such that his death might be valid for not only one man, but for all men.

Therefore, as far as the dignity of the person is concerned, First, to me this is very suspect, because it is taken for granted that, to be sure, a light punishment is of the same value for an extraordinary man as the most severe punishment for a common man: nay, on the contrary, why should I [not] believe that [that] law is unjust which would punish the same crime lightly in an extraordinary man, but most severely in a common man?⁷⁷

Thus, he insists, God makes no distinction of persons, even with reference to His mercy; what distinction could there possibly be, then, with regard to a punishment which ought to be inflicted from the standpoint of the most rigorous justice?

In a further elaboration of his argument, Socinus demonstrates that the punishment ought to be borne by the human nature. Indeed, the divine nature, in the Chalcedonian Christology, cannot suffer. Christ suffered only as man. Speaking almost as a Reformed theologian, Socinus rejects the Lutheran *communicatio idiomatum*, the sharing of attributes. He argues that if the human nature was in any way aided by the divine nature in bearing the punishment, the intent of the law was not properly fulfilled. The human nature itself must endure the punishment, and, moreover, the ability to endure the punishment must originate from this very human nature. The divine nature is, hence, irrelevant for the purpose of making satisfaction.

For the sake of the argument, he might grant not only that the divine nature could suffer, but that it could also give the sufferings of Christ a worth so great that it would be sufficient for all the infinities of punishments which we, individually and collectively, ought to bear. This only damages the orthodox case more severely. Some of the Scholastic Doctors pretended that a single drop of Christ's blood would be enough, and more than enough, to redeem the human race. If this is true, is God not then either ignorant, or monstrously savage, to subject Christ to so cruel a death?

Socinus argues at length that the Son was not able to make satisfaction to the Father, in the Trinity, for serious contradictions result from such a view. If the Son makes satisfaction to the Father, who makes satisfaction to the Son, who, as God, deserves it? If what is offered to one Person is offered to all, how does the idea of "payment" have any real content? What would the Son have, which the Father does not have, other than his distinctive attributes, such as the fact that he is "begotten"? Could he pay his distinctive attributes to the Father? That is nonsense; indeed, it violates the conservatives' own position, by dividing, rather than distinguishing, the essence of the Godhead. Finally, the power of making payment must, the orthodox theologians claim, originate from the divine essence itself. What intelligible meaning is there in distinguishing a person from the divine essence, in order that payment might be made back to the divine essence? All these contradictions make it quite clear that the concepts of the satisfaction theory are even inconsistent with the divinity of Christ; one must either

sacrifice the divinity of Christ, or admit that the divinity of Christ has, really nothing to do with making satisfaction. Socinus thus concludes that the person of Christ neither had, on earth, nor has, on high, any power "to make satisfaction for us to divine justice through the payment of the punishments which we owed."⁷⁸

We may now, at this point, look back at Socinus' statement of his programmatic aim in this Part Three and consider what he has accomplished. He announced two propositions which he wished to establish: "that Christ did not make satisfaction to divine justice for our sins, and, that it was not necessary that he should make satisfaction."⁷⁹ These are two very important statements; they are not only the basis of Part Three, they are the core of *De Jesu Christo Servatore*. It was neither possible, nor was it necessary, for Christ to make satisfaction

To establish these two propositions, Socinus undertook three steps. He said:

First, it ought to be proven that God was able to forgive our sins with right, when no true satisfaction for them had been received from any person, or in any way. Next, it will be demonstrated that He wished to do this. When this has been done, finally, I shall make plain that Christ was not able to make satisfaction to divine justice for our sins, either by his death or in any other manner.⁸⁰

He has, indeed, held closely to this stated plan, and his arguments are quite cogent. I have attempted to give you a few examples of his point of view and method, and some idea of the detail and force with which he undertakes his task. The section which we have been considering is one of the most crucial parts of his entire treatise. Much that goes before it is prolegomena; much that comes after it is commentary. This is, I think, the core.

In this core section, Socinus' theological method is, to some extent, apparent. He is first, and foremost, a Biblical theologian. Socinus recognized and respected the authority of Scripture. The revelation in Scripture is for him, I think, truly a final authority. For him, it is important that "remission of sins" is a Biblical concept, whereas "satisfaction" is not. Hence, the burden of proof is upon those who wished to try to construct such a "satisfaction" theory from Biblical and non-Biblical materials.

In the second place comes reason. Socinus is a firm believer in the use of human reason. He employs all his rational powers to think, from the standpoint of the Scriptures, what rational relationships must

necessarily follow from this "satisfaction" theory and to set them forth. Thus set forth, these rational relationships lead to contradictions which, if seen together, constitute one great *reductio ad absurdum* of the "satisfaction theory." It is not only not Biblical. It is, he proves, so shot through with structural inconsistencies and contradictions that it must, finally, fall.

Third, I would argue that Socinus considers theological questions from the standpoint of the doctrine of the Work of Christ, as that work is presented to us in Scripture. It is quite striking how, in the examples we have considered in his attack upon the satisfaction theory, both the Trinity and the Chalcedonian Christology are treated from this point of view. It seems to me that Socinus was deeply, religiously impressed with the tremendous importance of that good emergent into human life in the life and work of Jesus Christ. Christ is, for him, truly the Lord whom God raised up from death, and who now offers us salvation and eternal life. In his concern to explain what God accomplished in Christ, Socinus shows the character and concern of a genuine theologian.

Socinus' struggle with the satisfaction theory was, really, quite successful. To be sure, his powerful attack found many who were prepared to reply. As Professor Grensted tells us: "The Protestant divines especially girded up their loins to meet the charges which he developed with such power against the Penal theory."⁸¹ In the long run, they could not defend it. Few men can compare with Adolph Harnack in comprehensiveness of learning; therefore, Harnack's judgment on the outcome of this bitter struggle is worth hearing. Harnack says:

Faustus Socinus was not confuted by the orthodox, in so far as he demonstrated the worthlessness of the *juristic* thought-material with which they worked. But even other in respects his contemporaries were unable to controvert him, because they themselves did not clearly discern the tendencies of the form of doctrine that had come to them traditionally . . . 82

Socinus did see those tendencies, and he exposed them mercilessly to that criticism which they deserved.

Now, it seems to me that Socinus' legacy to his followers was not only one of rational criticism, but also one of religious interest in Christ. This implies repeated examination of the New Testament in the years after Socinus' death and repeated attempts to state more accurately what God accomplished in Christ. Something like this must have happened,

both in their own group, and as they later interacted with other groups, for we know that in later generations they went beyond Socinus' position. This is what I mean when I speak of a "transformation" of Socinianism in relation to the doctrine of the atonement.

Finally, let me say that it seems to me, also, that Socinus' influence deserves much more study than it has received. There is, in fact, much scholarly work to be done, and I hope that our seminaries and graduate schools will produce more men to engage in such research. Our self-understanding must include an accurate knowledge of the historical roots from which we come, and this requires constant scholarly work. Thus, I hope that future generations of the Unitarian Historical Society will, also, consider "Faustus Socinus in the Light of Modern Scholarship."

NOTES

1. George Huntston Williams, "Studies in the Radical Reformation (1517-1618): A Bibliographical Survey of Research Since 1939," *Church History*, XXVII, Nos. 1 & 2 (March-June 1958), 46-69, 124-160.

2. I omit a discussion of the work of Otto Fock, John Henry Scholten, Adolph Harnack, Johannes Kühler, Reinhold Seeberg, and others, since they are not recent.

3. David Munroe Cory, *Faustus Socinus* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1932), 155 pp.

4. Walter Nigg, *Geschichte des Religiösen Liberalismus* (Zurich/Leipzig: Max Niehans Verlag, 1937), 422 pp.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-48.

6. Earl Morse Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism: Socinianism and its Antecedents* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1947), 617 pp.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 387-419.

8. Faustus Socinus, "Christianae Religionis Brevis Institutio, Per Interrogationes & responsiones, quam Catechismus vulgo vocant," *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum . . .*, Vol. I: *Fausti Socini Senensis Opera Omnia in Duos Tomos distincta* (8 vols.; Irenopoli: Post annum Domini 1656), I, pp. 651-676.

9. Delio Cantimori, *Eretici Italiani del Cinquecento* (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, 1939), 447 pp.

10. Delio Cantimori, *Italianische Haeretiker der Spätrenaissance*, translated into German by Werner Kaegi (Basel: Benno Schwabe & Co., 1949), 509 pp.

11. Hans Emil Weber, *Reformation, Orthodoxie und Rationalismus*, Zweiter Teil, *Der Geist der Orthodoxie* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1951), pp. 184-215.

12. Giovanni Pioli, *Fausto Socino, Vita - Opere - Fortuna, Contributo alla Storia del Liberalismo Religioso Moderno* (Modena: Guanda, 1952), 670 pp.

13. George Huntston Williams, "Studies in the Radical Reformation (1517-1618): A Bibliographical Survey of Research Since 1939," *Church History*, XXVII, No. 2 (June 1958), 142.

14. *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, ed. George Huntston Williams, Angel M. Mergal, Vol. XXV of *The Library of Christian Classics*, ed. John Baillie, John T. McNeill, Henry P. Van Dusen (26 vols.; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), 421 pp.

15. "Bibliography of Material in English Translation Written by Representatives of the Radical Reformation (1524-1575)," *ibid.*, pp. 285-293.

16. George Huntston Williams, "Anabaptism and Spiritualism in the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania: An Obscure Phase in the Pre-History of Socinianism," *Studia Nad Arianizmem*, Pod redakcyą Ludwika Chmaj [a] (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, MCMLIX), pp. 215-262.

17. George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 924 pp.

18. Faustus Socinus, "De Jesu Christo Servatore, Hoc Est, Cur & qua rationes Jesus Christus noster Servatore sit, Fausti Socini Senensis Disputatio," *Fausti Socini Senensis Opera Omnia in Duos Tomos distincta*, Vol. II, pp. 115-246.

19. George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, p. 756.

20. *Ibid.* (Professor Williams continues, discussing Socinus' views on baptism.)

21. Ludwik Chmaj, "Wykady Rakowskie Fausta Socyna," *Studia Nad Arianizmem*, pp. 169-198. (English summary: "The Racow Lectures of Faustus Socinus," p. 536.)

22. Zbigniew Ogonowski, "Wiara I Rozum W Doktrynach Religijnych Socynian I Locke'a," *Studia Nad Arianizmem*, pp. 425-450. (English summary: "The Faith and Reason in the Religious Doctrines of the Socinians and John Locke," p. 542.)

23. Ludwik Chmaj, "Dwa Nieznane Listy Fausta Socyna," *Studia Nad Arianizmem*, pp. 527-530. (No English summaries.)

24. "Socinus' understanding of what man is formed the basis of his theology. This understanding, coupled with his reinstatement of man in the religious formula, was sum and substance of his first theological breakthrough." Phyllis-Anne Steinberg, "The Theological Breakthroughs of Faustus Socinus," (1960), p. 21. (Typewritten.)

25. "The concept of a developing, as opposed to a static God, is a theological breakthrough of such enormous proportions that we have not yet, after more than three-and-a-half centuries, fully realized its tremendous implications." *Ibid.*, p. 24.

26. Faust Socyn, *Listy [Letters]*, ed. Ludwik Chmaj (2 vols.; Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1959).

27. *Church History*, XXX, No. 1 (March 1961), 116-117.

28. Antal Pirnát, *Die Ideologie der Siebenburger Antitrinitarier in den 1570^{er} Jahren* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, Verlag der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1961), 217 pp.

29. *The Hibbert Journal*, LXI, No. 241 (January 1963), 75.

30. *Bibliographie de la Réforme: Ouvrages Parus de 1940 a 1955*, Fasc. IV, France, Grande Bretagne, Suisse (1962), Fasc. V, Pologne (1963), Publiée sous les auspices de la Commission Internationale d'Histoire Ecclésiastique Comparée, au sein de Comité International des Sciences Historiques: L. Willaert, J. N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, G. Ritter, J.-R. Palanque, L.-E. Halkin, M. Pacaut (5 fascs.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958-63).

31. G. L. Prestige, *God in Patriotic Thought* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1936), pp. 290-291.
32. Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1931), 179 pp.
33. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* iii. 18. 1. (Cf., L. W. Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement* [Manchester: At the University Press, 1920]), pp. 57-60.
34. S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi *Opera Omnia*, Franciscus Salesius Schmitt, ed. (5 vols.; Romae: Ex officina Sansaini et Soc., MDCCCCXL), Vol. II, pp. 37-133.
35. Robert S. Franks, *The Work of Christ: A Historical Study of Christian Doctrine* (London/Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1962), p. 146. (This is a one-volume edition of Robert S. Franks, *A History of the Doctrine of the Work Of Christ in its Ecclesiastical Development* [2 vols.; New York: Hodder and Stoughton, (1918)].)
36. L. W. Grensted, *op. cit.*, p. 241. (He is citing from: Francis Turretin, *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae* [Geneva, 1682], Pars ii, Locus xiv, "De Officio Christi Mediatoris," Q. 10.)
37. George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, p. 752.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Faustus Socinus, "Fausti Socini Senensis *Defensio Disputationis suae de loco septimi Capitis Epistolae ad Romanos*, sub nomine Prosperi Dysidae, ante 12 annos ab se editae. *Adversus Reprehensiones N.N. Ministri* (ut vocant) *Euangelici nuper scriptas, & ab amico ad se missas. Anno a Christo nato 1595* (Irenopoli: Post annum Domini 1656)," *Fausti Socini Senensis Opera Omnia in Duos Tomos distincta*, I, pp. 86-113.
40. "Jam vero, quoniam in responsione mea saepe cujusdam disputationis meae de Christo Servatore sit mentio . . ." ("Ad Lectorem," *Ibid.*, I, p. 88.)
41. Faustus Socinus, "F.S.S. Christiano Lectori S.D.," *Ibid.*, II, pp. 118-120. (This is prefaced to *De Jesu Christo Servatore*.)
42. Robert S. Franks, *The Work of Christ*, p. 373.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 371-372.
44. Faustus Socinus, "De Jesu Christo Servatore, Hoc Est, Cur & qua ratione Jesus Christus noster Servatore sit, Fausti Socini Senensis Disputatio," *Fausti Socini Senensis Opera Omnia in Duos Tomos distincta*, II, p. 186.
45. *Ibid.*, II, p. 186.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 186-187.
49. *Ibid.*, II, p. 122.
50. *Ibid.*, II, p. 187.
51. *Ibid.*, II, p. 122.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*, II, p. 186. (Cf., note 47.)

54. *Ibid.*, II, p. 188.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*, II, p. 189.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 190-191.
60. *Ibid.*, II, p. 191.
61. *Ibid.* (Jeremiah 31:34)
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*, II, p. 192.
66. *Ibid.*, II, p. 194.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*, II, p. 195.
69. "The date of the legislation of Zaleucus is assigned to 660 B.C. His code, which was severe, is stated to have been the first collection of written laws that the Greeks possessed." William Smith, *Smaller Classical Dictionary*, revised by E. H. Blakeney and John Warrington (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1958), p. 317.
70. Faustus Socinus, *op. cit.*, II, p. 195.
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*, II, p. 197.
73. *Ibid.*
74. I Corinthians 15:14 and 17.
75. Psalm 2:7.
76. Faustus Socinus, *Ibid.*, II, p. 198.
77. *Ibid.*, II, p. 199.
78. *Ibid.*, II, p. 202.
79. *Ibid.*, II, p. 186. (Cf. note 45.)
80. *Ibid.* (Cf. note 45.)
81. L. W. Grensted, *op. cit.*, p. 289.
82. Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma*, translated from the Third German Edition by Neil Buchanan (7 vols.; New York: Dover Publications, 1961), Vol. VII, pp. 158-159.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Bibliography of Anabaptism, 1520-1630. Compiled by Hans J. Hillerbrand. Elkhart, Indiana: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1962. 281 pages. \$8.00.

This *Bibliography of Anabaptism* represents a major contribution to the field of Anabaptist-Mennonite studies, and it will prove to be a highly useful research aid to those whose major concern relates to other phases of Reformation research. It is the first of two bibliographies which are "designed to cover exhaustively the entire Anabaptist-Mennonite movement from the early sixteenth century to the present day" (vii). Both volumes are organized chronologically to achieve this purpose. This first volume covers approximately 1520-1630; the second volume will cover the period after 1630, which may more appropriately be termed "Mennonite."

The Institute of Mennonite Studies, which commissioned Professor Hillerbrand to carry out this work, is the research institute of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (Mennonite Biblical Seminary at Elkhart, Indiana and Goshen College Biblical Seminary at Goshen, Indiana.) The late Harold S. Bender, assistant director of the Institute, was the general editor for this project. He was assisted by Cornelius J. Dyck, director of the Institute. The Foundation for Reformation Research, Inc. of St. Louis, Missouri, provided financial subsidy for both research and publication. This support is noteworthy, and testifies to the interdenominational value of the project.

Major attention is given to what the Mennonites term "the central and main line of Anabaptism" (viii). A more inclusive bibliography would have required more time, and would have been more costly. "The decision was therefore made to exclude such important and interesting personalities and movements as the Spiritualists, the Anti-trinitarians, the revolutionaries pure and simple, and later radical sects arising after the Anabaptists" (vii). This decision has not been adhered to rigorously, but, rather, proportionately. Some mention of these other categories does appear. About two and one-half pages (pp. 200-202) are devoted to "Relationship to Contemporary and Subsequent Movements (Other than the Main Stream Reformation)." These include references concerning Socinianism, Baptists, Spiritualism, and the Peasants' Revolt.

The starting-point and general plan of organization for the book were both derived from Karl Schottenloher, *Bibliographie zur Deutschen Geschichte im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung, 1517-1585*, (six volumes; Leipzig: 1933-1940). Thus, Section one gives a systematic coverage of geographical areas; Section two is an alphabetical listing of persons; Section three discusses topical studies under thirteen subdivisions. A Title Index and an Author Index are both provided. An Addenda, of about fifty-three items, closes the book. These addenda items are listed in accordance with the schema of organization, but are not included in the indices.

It is clear that great effort has been made to achieve a comprehensive work. "Only unpublished material, such as manuscript and archival holdings, were excluded on principle, with the exception of dissertations and a few rare manu-

scripts" (ix). One excellent feature is the inclusion of the results of Irvin B. Horst's recent *Bibliography of Menno Simons* (No. 4665). This adds new information concerning the publication places and dates of many of Menno's most important writings. In a great many cases, library locations have been indicated, but it would have been too costly to extend this feature to every reference. (Library locations are not given for periodical literature; for these the "Union List of Serials" may be used.) Reviews are sometimes cited, for both books and periodical literature.

It is unfortunate that numerous errors appear in this work. Sometimes a letter is subjoined to a number in the numerical sequence. This may mean either that the works are related (Nos. 112, 112a), or the letter may merely subjoin another, unrelated work (Nos. 1199, 1199a). There are many vacancies in the numerical sequence. Neither the Editor's "Introduction" nor the "Author's Preface" gives any explanation for these omissions. One is inclined to suspect that they simply represent errors, when one notes that No. 2237, an omission under the title "Hand de Ries," is precisely the place where the doctoral dissertation of the Director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies should have been listed. This would then be:

2236 Dyck, Cornelius John: *Hans de Ries: Theologian and Churchman. A Study in Second Generation Dutch Anabaptism*. Dissertation, Univ. of Chicago, 1962. 335 pp.

Such an omission is remarkable, for Dr. Dyck's work is not listed although other dissertations have been listed even though they are still "In Progress" (No. 3957).

In many cases, very helpful cross-references have been noted, an occasionally a work is listed under more than one category (Nos. 238, 697). Some cross-references are rather clearly erroneous. (No. 1160 refers to No. 1539, but No. 1539 does not mention Anneken Jans; No. 1160 might properly refer to either No. 4033 or No. 4354a [cf. G.H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, p. 383 and and p. 386] No. 4502 refers to No. 722; it should read "See also No. 4443.") There are a number of detectable misprints. A list of omissions, of misprints, and of suggested additional items has been sent to Professor Hillerbrand and Professor Dyck.

Despite these unfortunate weaknesses, this is a very valuable work. Anyone seriously interested in the study of the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement, and related movements, will find the *Bibliography of Anabaptism* virtually indispensable, and well worth the purchase price. We are all much indebted to Professor Hillerbrand for the signal service which he has performed.

JOHN C. GODBEY

The Meadville Theological School

The Radical Reformation. By George H. Williams. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962. 865 pages. \$15.00.

In this long-awaited work, Professor Williams of the Harvard Divinity School carries Anabaptist scholarship to a new plane, and places all students of the history and theology of conscience in his debt. For breadth of view, mastery of detail, consciousness of sequence and relationship, and originality of conception it surpasses all previous treatments of the subject.

Williams takes as his task the delineation of tendencies in the "Radical" Reformation, a disparate but coherent movement co-existent with the "Magisterial" Reformation (Lutheranism/Zwinglianism/Calvinism), the Catholic Reformation, and the English Reformation. Eschewing "a definitive account" as "premature . . . at this stage," he offers instead a "rough outline of the picture shaping up in the minds of the specialists," adding that "Even the specialists may be helped in their archival and monographic burrowings by coming out for a moment to blink at the scene as a whole." At one level, then, this is a progress report on research to date, but it is more - the "more" consisting in the articulation of historical affinities and theological principles revealing the inner unity of the movement as a whole and giving birth to a renewed sense of contemporary kinship among the heirs of the Radical Reformation - the Mennonites, Schwenckfelders, and Unitarians.

It is Williams' thesis that the Radical Reformation was "a loosely interrelated congeries of reformations and restitutions which, besides the Anabaptists of various types, included the Spiritualists and spiritualizers of varying tendencies, and the Evangelical Rationalists, largely Italian in origin" (xxiv). This three-part schematization, first formulated in Williams' *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers* (1958) in the "Library of Christian Classics," has been widely accepted as a most useful typology in the study of radical Christianity. Further distinctions within each category make possible a high degree of precision in nomenclature; the Anabaptists, for example, are divided into Evangelicals (including the Swiss Brethren), Revolutionaries (including the Münsterites), and Spiritualizers (including John Denck). Because of Williams' sensitivity to themes and variations, the typology is genuinely helpful. A by-product of the author's concern for terminology is a specialized vocabulary wherein new forms are employed in the interest of precision or objectivity (such as "anti-Nicene" for "Anti-trinitarian," p. 319), and nouns are turned into adjectives, e.g. "conventicular," "belletristic," "agapetic"; also "solafideism." All in all, the style is direct and lucid, occasionally rising to an exceptional metaphor.

The characteristic tenets of the Radical Reformation, according to Williams, are the *covenanting church* consisting of *regenerate Christians* admitted by *believers' baptism*, seeking a *restitution of the true apostolic church* in *voluntary association*, *irenical* in intent, *eschatological* in expectation, under the *government of God* revealed in *Scripture* and/or the *Holy Spirit*, *explicitly affirmed*. The radical reformers tended to deny predestination, to view faith as issuing in purity of life, and to spiritualize the Lord's Supper (e.g. Schwenckfeld's doctrine of the "inner communion" with the celestial flesh of Christ) while asserting the

mortality of the soul (see Williams' original analysis of "psychopannychism," the belief in the death or sleep of the soul pending the general resurrection). Perhaps the unitive concept is that of the Word of God as primary sacrament (pp. 88, 91) with its implications for morality and martyrdom. Individualism, lay leadership, and Biblically-grounded discipline (as by admonition and the ban) are integral aspects of Anabaptist Christianity, which Williams describes as "true sectarianism" (p. 854). All these threads, and many more, are traced with skill and persistence.

The author's method is genetic. The great diversity of events, and the necessity of parallel construction, forces him, however, to interrupt his narrative at many points to pick up and assimilate a "dangling" impulse. Williams' solution to the problem of particularity vs. extension is thus a compromise which, in spite of luxuriant cross-references, frequently frustrates the flow of narrative. I suppose the problem illustrates both the impossibility of absolute history (i.e. the impossibility of occupying - or studying - more than one place at one time) and the necessity of some transhistorical orientation - theology, or philosophy of history - as the context in which discrete events achieve integration. At any rate, Williams' experiment in topical, typological history will assist others in perfecting their own modes of narrative.

We are grateful to the author for illuminating both the well-documented and familiar, and the shadowy and little understood aspects of his subject. Included in the former are his discussions of the Anabaptism of Zurich and Strassburg, Marpeck and Menno, and the tragedy of Münster. Included in the latter are his discussions of Anabaptism in Augsburg and Moravia, Carlstadt's sacramentarianism, Schwenckfeld's essential Christianity, and a chapter on marriage and divorce. The portrayal of individuals in the midst of social revolution, sectarian idealism, and existential suffering is particularly successful. Unitarians will welcome the new insights, based on recent literature in a half dozen languages, into Servetus, Blandrata, and Laelius and Faustus Socinus, plus such tributary thinkers as Camillo Renato, Francis Stancaro, Simon Budny, and Jacob Palaeologus. There are satisfying accounts of the rise of Unitarianism in Poland and Transylvania (ch. 27, 28), and Williams' explication of the Christology of Faustus Socinus is the clearest in the English language.

A singular contribution of the volume is the evidence it offers of sustained, co-operative scholarship. The author builds upon the researches of many scholars, most notably the Mennonites, whose *Encyclopedia* and *Quarterly Review* are constantly cited, the Schwenckfelders, whose recently completed *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum* in nineteen volumes constitutes an enduring monument to the mind and spirit of their founder, and to his (Williams') own graduate students, who have caught the enthusiasm of their preceptor for "the recovery of the Anabaptist vision." The work serves to correct the earlier accounts of, for example, Bullinger, Harnack, and Wilbur in the interest respectively of historical objectivity, institutional description, and ideological clarity. It is fortunate that Hans J. Hillerbrand's *Bibliography of Anabaptism 1520-1630* appears simultaneously with Williams' work to direct future scholars to the original sources.

The Radical Reformation will achieve a lasting place in American religious scholarship. In George Williams, Anabaptism and its kindred movements have found a comprehensive historian. It is with expectancy that we await his treatment of a larger theme, the history of Christianity.

DAVID B. PARKE

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Italian Reformation Studies in Honor of Laelius Socinus (1562-1962). The Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society, Volume XIV, Parts I and II [1962-1963]. Edited by John A. Tedeschi.

Collections of essays and *Festschriften* all too frequently present the reader with a number of totally unconnected articles, despite an announced theme around which they are supposedly organized. The present volume is a welcome exception. It is a pleasure to find a thoughtfully arranged series of studies standing for the most part in a clearly discernible relation to a central topic.

Italian Reformation Studies in Honor of Laelius Socinus commemorates the four-hundredth anniversary of the Italian reformer's death. In spite of his influence on his nephew Fausto and the Socinian movement, Lelio Sozzini remains an enigmatic figure. Too few of his writings are extant to enable a biographer to analyze the evolution of his religious thought, or discuss with precision his relation to such figures as Calvin, Melancthon, and Bullinger. Thus, close studies of reformers who might have influenced him directly, of books he might have known, and of the general religious situation in Italy and Switzerland during his lifetime become most important in an attempt to place Lelio in the religious history of the sixteenth century.

The volume under discussion comprises documents and essays dealing with the Italian reformation, the Sozzini family,* and Lelio himself. It opens with five (rather than four, as stated in the editorial heading) brief reviews by Roland Bainton of books dealing with aspects and figures of the movement for church reform in Italy. Next, Oddone Ortolani offers some very general suggestions concerning the nature of this movement. He stresses that most of its adherents did not envisage rebellion from the institutional church as a necessary condition for the return to pure Christianity. Rather, their hopes for reform centered on the papacy. They manifested a striking unwillingness to break with existing institutions, aspiring to influence and permeate rather than abolish the ecclesiastical hierarchy. However, the reasons given by the author for the prevalence of these attitudes remain mere suggestions rather than explanations.

* The family tree of the Sozzini family with notes prepared by the Editors will appear in ampler form in a Harvard University Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge, 1966.

A carefully annotated translation of the *Beneficio di Cristo* introduces the reader to the thought and concerns of the early Italian reform movement. Dealing with the problem of justification in simple language and printed for the first time in Venice in 1543, the tract reached a wide audience. It was soon attacked as heretical, and became a center of controversy. While members of the hierarchy like Cardinals Cortese or Morone considered it orthodox, it was publicly burned in Naples only a year after its appearance. There is still no agreement among scholars about the nature of the work and the exact derivation of its ideas.

In her excellent introduction to the work, Ruth Prelowski discusses the question of its authorship and its relation to the thought of Italian and northern reformers, giving a full bibliography. Her translation is clear and idiomatic, and should prove most helpful to students of sixteenth century religious history. Two recent pamphlets of Tommaso Bozza might have been taken into account: *Il Beneficio di Cristo e la Istituzione della Religione Christiana di Calvino* (Rome, 1961), mentioned but briefly in a footnote, and *Introduzione al Beneficio di Cristo* (Rome, 1963). Both are interesting although quite sketchy attempts to show the dependence of the *Beneficio* on the works of Calvin.

"Camillo Renato c. 1500? - 1575," by George H. Williams, is a detailed study of one reformer, exemplifying the evangelical radicalism associated with the Italian reform movement. Paolo Ricci, Lisia Phileno, and Camillo Renato, sometimes assumed to be different men, are identified as one and the same person, an important figure in the history of Socinianism. Brought to trial before the inquisition in Bologna in 1540 for his beliefs discussed on pp. 131-135), Renato escaped from prison in 1542 and settled in the Rhaetian Republic. His interest turned above all to questions about the nature of baptism and the eucharist. Objecting to the term "sacrament" as unbiblical, Renato soon was suspected of heresy, and several confrontations with Rhaetian theologians and elders ensued. It is of interest that the works of Camillo Renato will occupy Volume I, to be edited by Antonio Rotondo of Ferrara, in the projected *Corpus Reformatorum Italianorum*.

Through a detailed discussion of the accusations brought against Renato and the description of his examination before Rhaetian divines in 1551, the author reconstructs Renato's theological views. A complex thinker emerges, whose theological radicalism eventually resulted in "his peculiar form of spiritualizing, psychopannychist, anti-Nicene Anabaptism" (p. 174). In addition to his great success among the inhabitants of the Valtelline, his significance lies in his influence on Lelio Sozzini, whom he first met in 1547. A full bibliography greatly adds to the value of this study.

Camillo Renato is best known as a radical reformer. But another aspect of his thought is of interest to students of the Reformation: his plea for religious toleration. In 1554, on the anniversary of Servetus' death, Renato addressed a *Carmen* to Calvin, translated here by Dorothy Rounds. Attacking the burning of heretics, Renato opposed the use of force by Christians, basing his arguments chiefly on Saint Paul. The apostolic ban should be the only punishment for culprits, to whom Christian charity must extend. Unfortunately the translation leaves a great deal to be desired. Some sentences are almost incomprehensible; p. 191, lines 182-185 should suffice as an example of the inadequate English version here presented.

By contrast, the next two selections are translated very well. The *Apologia* of Alphonsus Lyncurius offers a vigorous defense of religious toleration. The author of the pseudonymous work, identified as Celio Secundo Curione, also takes the burning of Servetus as his point of departure. In humanist fashion he freely uses classical allusions to add force and elegance to his arguments. Four letters from the correspondence of Calvin and Lelio Sozzini follow, dealing mainly with the latter's doubts about the resurrection of the flesh and Calvin's lengthy answers discussing the topic.

An article by David Wills on "The Influence of Laelius Socinus on Calvin's Doctrines of the Merit of Christ and the Assurance of Faith" attempts to reconstruct questions posed by Sozzini to Calvin. These supposedly resulted in the clarification of Calvin's teaching about the merit of Christ. In spite of valuable insights, the author's cumbersome style prevents the reader from always following the development of his thought, especially on the last two pages. Some of the footnotes, such as p. 236, No. 4, and pp. 240-41, No. 3, might have been proof-read more carefully.

John Tedeschi and Josephine von Henneberg present documents of the inquisitorial trial of Pietro Antonio da Cervia in a model edition and translation. The concrete picture of a Modenese evangelical conventicle emerges from the answers of the accused, who did not scruple to give ample information about his fellow-believers, their opinions and practices. Cervia was not an educated man; the simple description of his religious beliefs makes it possible to form an idea of the literate, average convert to Protestant teaching.. Particularly interesting is his testimony concerning the books he read to a squad of soldiers in 1560: works by Calvin, Alonso de Valdés, and Curione. Very few documents of proceedings before the Inquisition like this one are available, and almost none have been translated. The editors have performed a very real service to American students of the Reformation.

The book closes with a brief note about a comment of Fausto Sozzini on the first book of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, and copious notes of primary and secondary materials concerning the various members of the Sozzini family. Taken together, the documents and studies in this anniversary volume are a valuable addition to our knowledge of the movement for religious reform in sixteenth century Italy.

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The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America. By Sidney E. Mead. New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, 1963. \$4.00.

We have between the covers of this one book nine separate essays, written at different times during the author's long and distinguished career as a teacher of American church history, and reduced to a unity which is nearly, if not altogether, complete. It does not profess to be and should not be judged by the standards of a complete outlined history of Christianity in America. It is rather a weaving together and critical treatment of some of the main strands that have gone into the formation of our religious tradition. Some of these main topics are: religious liberty (the greatest contribution of the history of the church in our country to Christian history as a whole), the nature and function of the denomination in the new country, the role of the frontier in shaping our religious spirit and institutions, revivalism as an enduring characteristic of our method of recruitment for the churches. All these factors appeared in their pervasive influence before the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For the period between 1875 and 1930 when his treatment ends, Dr. Mead has used the suggestion, propounded by Arthur M. Schlesinger, to the effect that during the last quarter of the nineteenth century Christianity in America met its two most crucial challenges: the one to its theological adequacy and the other to the adequacy of its social outlook and program.

The title comes from an extract from a petition addressed by John Clarke to Charles II for obtaining a charter for Rhode Island. John Clarke was one of the three earliest leaders of the Baptists in that part of the country and shared their interest in establishing complete religious liberty. This was done by way of a "lively experiment" and furnished the example and inspiration for the relations between church and state which was afterward made normative for the Federal government itself.

Using this as a theme Professor Mead expatiates at length on the novelty of a vigorous nation's adopting complete religious liberty as a deliberate policy. We who live in the middle of the benefits of religious liberty, sometimes fail to realize what a great innovation it was when adopted by the Constitutional fathers of our country, and what changes it was bound to make in the pattern of religious organization in the new world as contrasted with that of the old where state and church had been united since the days of Constantine. Dr. Mead stresses the interweaving of three factors in bringing about this highly novel result. They were in the order of importance: the rationalist outlook, the practical realities of the situation, especially the great number of and variety of religious bodies which had already been planted here and none of which saw any opportunity for dominating the rest, and finally the voices of several religious bodies already established here but under circumstances which made them vigorous advocates of religious liberty. These voices were heard in proportion as their owners had been persecuted and felt the need of religious liberty. So it was that the liberty which was written into our Constitution came not wholly as a result of idealistic motives but partly because of the pluralism of a religious situation existing when the Constitution came to be written, partly because of a reaction of rationalists like Jefferson and Madison against the fanaticism and bloodshed of the religious

wars of the seventeenth century, and partly because of the cries of hope which came from bodies of the too much oppressed. Dr. Mead has thus presented a picture of the incorporation of religious liberty into our national institutions which, though not wholly idealistic, is certainly painted so as to bring out the varied and numerous advantages which have flowed as results from this action. It may come as something of a surprise to many Protestants to learn that religious liberty is not a characteristic of Protestantism as such, but that Protestants as well as Catholics have had to learn the lesson of granting to others the liberty they wish themselves to enjoy, as one has said, "over the dusty highway of expediency and in the hard school of experience".

The role of the frontier in the shaping of American thoughts about the destiny of the country and the people is vividly reduced to terms of space within which was large opportunity for physical movement, just for the joy of it and for the opportunity it gave to escape harsh restrictions and harassing regulations. This may be most vividly portrayed in terms rather of space than of cultural deficiencies. The adequacy of "room enough" to break down the religious establishments such as existed in Massachusetts Bay is indicated by an apt quotation from John Cotton who hesitated to apply banishment to Roger Williams: "The Jurisdiction (whence a man has been banished) is but small, and the Countrey round about it large and fruitful: where a man may make his choice of variety of more pleasant and profitable seats, then he leaveth behinde him. In which respect, Banishment in this countrey is not counted so much a confinement as an enlargement." (p. 13).

Chapter 7 is devoted to the treatment of that characteristically American religious phenomenon, the denomination. Dr. Mead's terminology is clearly explained. By denomination, he means a religious organization of voluntary composition as it must be in view of the free church arrangements in this country. Its characteristic is not, says Dr. Mead, chiefly confessionalism and certainly not authoritarianism but rather purposiveness. The purpose of most of the denominations was defined by the prevailingly pietist background out of which they came. It was avowedly evangelistic and its method was largely revivalistic. We are not surprised to learn that the line between recruiting men for the Kingdom and recruiting them for the group itself, in other words the line between Evangelism and group perpetuation, was not clearly drawn.

This reviewer is inclined to agree wholeheartedly with the tendency now observable in many writers on American church history to say that the terminology of Troeltsch in which he spoke of the differences between church and sect is not wholly adequate to the American situation; but it does seem as though we have lost a certain flexibility in discarding them altogether for the rather amorphous term, denomination. Etymologically of course the word denomination indicates simply a name or designation. Eighteenth century men like John Wesley used it in a sense which would include Jews, Turks and Papists within its scope. They were fond of using it in this broad sense in such phrases as "all men, whatever their denomination." The religious bodies in the United States did not, just because they had begun to flourish under a radically new set of conditions, lose all connection with their past; they served the same purposes as they had before -- including, we are bound to admit, not only evangelization whether by revivalism or by other means, but also the continued

worship of God and the pastoral care of their flocks. In these various branches of endeavor there were wide differences of approach and emphasis. I miss in Mead's account of the denominational system, if system it can be called, any discussion of the evolution of the Roman Catholic church, in the light of his assertion (p. 107) that by the middle of the nineteenth century it was the largest single religious body in the country. I should be interested to learn whether Catholicism might be treated under the heading of "denomination" or not. The account we have here of the characteristics the denominations shared in common is the most illuminating; and the strengths and weaknesses of what may be called the broad middle belt of American religious organizations is most vividly portrayed.

The analysis of the temporary alliance between the pietistic religious bodies and the rationalists for the purpose of achieving religious freedom is most instructive. I however find it hard to concur with Dr. Mead's verdict that after the break-up of this alliance, the denominations felt themselves slightly irrelevant to the common welfare. The feeling was based on the assumption that the common welfare was served only by those teachings which the denominations held in common; whereas the denominations' peculiarities were really those factors in their makeup which justified their separate existence. I have never found any signs that the denominational leadership felt this sense of irrelevance, even so far as public welfare was concerned. To be sure Peter Cartwright, for instance, ran for Congress not as a Methodist but as a Christian citizen, but he would have taken strong measures to demonstrate that the chief business of the Methodist Episcopal church was to save souls and that its existence was justified by the fact that it offered a much better and more effective way of doing this than (say) the Baptist or the Cambellite communions.

Chapters 8 and 9 are devoted to consideration of main trends in American Protestantism since the Civil War. Chapter 8, entitled "Free Denominationalism to Americanism," treats of the process by which Protestantism became practically a culture religion, that is to say, it chimed in with and sanctioned the prevalent tendency toward nationalistic imperialism. In our political life this resulted in the annexation of the Philippines for motives in which gold nuggets and pagans and Roman Catholics who needed to be converted were inexpably intertwined. Protestantism lent the sanction of its approval to the gospel of wealth, the most flagrant expositor of which was Andrew Carnegie. Protestants generally by their writing and preaching supported the doctrine that individualistic competition would in the end secure the greatest good for all. The Protestants of the end of the century cherished a comfortable outlook which was convinced that those who suffered from poverty did so because of their own idleness or moral delinquency. It took the large epidemic of strikes before and after the turn of the century four of which were bloody and brutal conflicts, as well as the growing realization that the denominations were losing their hold on working people, to make an impression on this intellectual armor.

Chapter 9, entitled "From Americanism to Christianity," tells the story of the ways in which American Protestantism responded to the dual challenge to its intellectual life and to its response to the growing social needs of an urbanized nation. A recurrent theme in the book is the almost total neglect of intellectual

formulation of the faith throughout the nineteenth century of American Protestantism. A free church in a free state, says Dr. Mead, is the great success of American Christianity; but its theological lassitude constitutes its great failure. In chapter 9 he speaks of the impact of evolutionary doctrine on the theological thought of Protestants forcing them to pick up the unfinished theological business which they had neglected since the beginning of the century.

The response of the denominations to the challenge of "the social problem" was a gradual one. It began after the Civil War with such impulses as Washington Gladden's cry in the wilderness and culminated in the first decade of the twentieth century when the Social Gospel became "official."

In describing the protean phenomenon known as fundamentalism, Dr. Mead observes that it was "as broad, comprehensive and amorphous as what it opposed" (p. 183). Its relation to the growing Social Gospel movement of the time he recognizes by saying it was a reaction to the Social Gospel. He notes its political aspect as well, insofar as the fundamentalist leaders tried to capture the machinery of their various denominations for their own purposes. That theological reconstruction was part of their purpose is also noted, but the tools with which they had to work were inadequate to their purpose. The fundamentals themselves were couched in terms that were either pre- or post-theological.

The reading of these last two chapters is an antidote for complacency over the accomplishments of the denominations during the last part of the last century and the first part of this. Only now are we learning the necessity of walking the thin line between irrelevance and "culture protestantism," between inability to carry on a conversation with the scientists and complete capitulation to their presuppositions, between a tendency to regard the sufferings of the disinherited as part of an arrangement by a benevolent Providence, and an outlook which would regard the relief of their injustices as constituting the advent of the Kingdom of heaven. Dr. Mead believes the period in which we now find ourselves (which began about 1930) is characterized by "a heightened theological consciousness . . . and positive attempts to revitalize the life of the denominations on the basis of theological formulations of the nature of the church and its relation to the general culture" (p. 187).

It is not only a stimulating intellectual experience, it is also an aesthetic delight to read this book. It is written in a concise, illuminating style with many apt allusions not only to other writers of history and church history but to the literary exponents of our culture as well.

RICHARD M. CAMERON

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Prophet of Liberty: The Life and Times of Wendell Phillips. By Oscar Sherwin. New York: Bookman Associates, 1958. 814 pages. \$10.00.

Wendell Phillips: Brahmin Radical. By Irving H. Bartlett. Boston: Beacon Press, 1961. 438 pages. \$5.95.

"His life had no events; his speeches were its only incidents," writes Oscar Sherwin of Wendell Phillips, the radical Boston abolitionist. To render an interesting account of such a life is a formidable task. In their recent biographies of Phillips, both Dr. Sherwin and Irving Bartlett have done their work well. Both books are the product of careful scholarship and writing. Dr. Sherwin's is the more comprehensive and is valuable for its wealth of background material, its many excerpts from Phillips' speeches, and its exhaustive references, notes and bibliography. The author appears uncritically extreme, however, in his favorable appraisals of Phillips and John Brown and in his unfavorable appraisal of Abraham Lincoln. Dr. Bartlett's biography should hold more appeal for the general reader. It is more smoothly written, and with less freightage of background material the personality of Phillips emerges more clearly.

Both biographies consider the relationship between Phillips and Theodore Parker in some detail. The two men, though differing widely in theology, were fellow-abolitionists, neighbors and friends; after Parker's illness and death, Phillips frequently occupied the pulpit at the Music Hall. Briefer mention is made of other abolitionist Unitarian ministers -- William Ellery Channing, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, James Freeman Clarke and Samuel May. Other references to the Unitarians (found chiefly in Dr. Sherwin's biography) tend to be unflattering. Phillips thought that the Unitarians, whom he claimed were "always picking at him because he was orthodox," were in fact illiberal and generally pro-slavery out of economic interest. When the fugitive slave, Thomas Sims, was captured in Boston, the *Liberator* reported: "The bells of the Orthodox, Methodist and Universalist Churches of Waltham were tolled on Saturday when the news of the man stealing was received. The bell on the Unitarian Church being clogged with cotton would not sound."

In view of the present crisis in race relations, the publication of these biographies of Wendell Phillips is timely. Phillips' philosophy and tactics deserve reconsideration by the churchman and reformer of today.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This issue of the *Proceedings* was projected some years ago to mark the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the National Conference of Unitarian Churches. Publication has been made possible at this time by a generous grant from the Trustees of the John Lindsley Fund, and the Society wishes to acknowledge with thanks this assistance.

Henry Whitney Bellows was the driving force behind the organization of the National Conference, and indeed the most prominent Unitarian denominational leader of his day. More recently, he has been the most important neglected figure in our history. That this neglect is unwarranted is indicated by the articles in this issue. In one he appears as the Christian ecumenist, in another as the institutional innovator, in the third as the skilled negotiator and reconciler of conflicting interests. When three authors, representing different theological positions within our movement, all find that in dealing with Bellows the temptation is irresistible to draw lessons applicable to our own day, it is clear that there is a richness and complexity in his thought that warrants further exploration; and it argues for a range and variety in his contribution to the Unitarian cause that make him the possession of no single grouping within our movement today.

A brief summary of Bellows's career may help to place the episodes treated in these articles in perspective. He was born in Boston, on June 11, 1814. His great grandfather, Col. Benjamin Bellows, was the founder of Walpole, New Hampshire; and Bellows always had a strong attachment to the town, where he acquired property that he used for many years as a summer home. He attended the Round Hill School in Northampton, Mass., and graduated from Harvard College in the class of 1832. After an interval, he attended the Harvard Divinity School, graduating in 1837. He spent one winter preaching in Mobile, Alabama; and was then called to the First Congregational Church in New York, now more commonly known as All Souls Church, where he served until his death, forty-three years later.

Bellows' success in the parish was noteworthy, but his wider interests and accomplishments were equally impressive. Within the Unitarian body he exercised great influence, both informally through his wide-ranging contacts, and formally through such instruments as the *Christian Inquirer* founded in 1847 and the National Conference organized in 1865. In the field of social reform, he attracted attention in 1857 with a series of Lowell Lectures on poverty and crime, in which he urged that Christian charity meant the elimination of poverty by rooting out its causes, not merely palliatives for the relief of victims.

Education concerned him, both as part of the solution to problems of poverty, and as an aspect of denominational strategy; and he was especially active in raising funds for the support of Antioch College, Meadville Theological School, and the Harvard Divinity School.

In the sectional conflict, Bellows was an anti-slavery man from an early date, though decidedly not a Garrisonian; in the crisis of 1861, he was a vigorous spokesman for the Union and supporter of the Lincoln administration. His most widely acclaimed public service was as President of the United States Sanitary Commission, which organized medical and relief work for the soldiers of the Union armies. At a later date, when his parishioner, Dorman B. Eaton, was a leader in the movement for civil service reform, Bellows was one of his associates.

Bellows was twice married. His first wife was Eliza N. Townsend, the daughter of one of the founders of the New York church, who died in 1869. In 1874, he married Anna Huidekoper Peabody, daughter of the Rev. Ephraim Peabody, minister of King's Chapel from 1846 to 1856. He died on January 30, 1882, and was buried in Walpole.

HENRY WHITNEY BELLOWS'S VISION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

By Harry M. Stokes
Boston, Massachusetts

On May 30, 1882, the Reverend Frederic Henry Hedge, the Unitarian doyen of his age, gave two memorial addresses to the Annual Meeting of the American Unitarian Association. Two eminent Unitarians had died that year. The first was a churchman and liberal prelate, the second a prophet and seer; the former was an organization man and dedicated defender of institutional religion, the latter, a poet, essayist, and transcendental iconoclast; the one brought the Unitarian denomination into organic existence, the other quit his pulpit and bade a graduating class of fledgling ministers "to go alone" as newborn bards of the Holy Ghost, casting behind all conformity, and acquainting men at first hand with Deity. That two such different men should be eulogized on a single occasion proves but one thing: that modern American Unitarianism had come of age, bearing within itself a theological pluralism to be found nowhere else in Christendom.

There was, however, an ironical aspect to these two memorial addresses by Dr. Hedge. The man he described first, the man who had done so much to build up the churches, to iron out the theological differences among liberal Christians, non-Christian liberals, transcendentalists, and evangelical Unitarians, is all but forgotten today among his ecclesiastical heirs, while the preacher who made the lyceum his pulpit and secular society his congregation is the most revered, read, quoted, and virtually canonized saint within the present Unitarian Universalist denomination.

It is not my intention to deepen the irony which time and change have etched into our sectarian history, but rather within a very limited sphere to redress the balance, and to give somewhat belated and more equitable attention to the man whom Dr. Hedge called "our Bishop, our Metropolitan," the man whose "organizing genius" gave Unitarianism — and in these latter days, Unitarian Universalism — its "body as compact as our unformalized theology and the right to differ . . . will allow." The second figure whom Dr. Hedge praised as "at the head of American literature" was of course Ralph Waldo Emerson, while the churchman whose vision was prophetic of the Christian Church as it is now emerging in this century was the Reverend Henry Whitney Bellows, minister of All Souls' Unitarian Church in New York.¹

The theme of this essay is Bellows's vision of the Christian Church, for it was in his role as a churchman that he left behind his most enduring accomplishment. Dr. Wright's essay, which follows this one, will describe in detail the institutional work of Bellows in building up the Unitarian denomination after the Civil War; the concern of this paper is to suggest the theological motivation and vision that prompted that arduous work.

It should be borne in mind that, like his great predecessor St. Paul, Bellows was not a systematic theologian. He was first and foremost a preacher and apologist for a liberal Christian faith within the world of his age, to which he addressed himself in terms of the needs of the time and the exigencies of place and occasion. For that reason it is to scattered references throughout his sermons that one must turn to reconstruct a "doctrine of the church." Fortunately two long addresses, *The Suspense of Faith* and *A Sequel to "The Suspense of Faith"*, as well as a volume of collected sermons published under the title *Re-Statements of Christian Doctrine*, provide ample material for an understanding of his ecclesiology.²

Theologically, Bellows belonged to that school of Unitarianism that found its most eloquent spokesman in William Ellery Channing; but the religious ideas of 1819 were not necessarily exactly the same as those which Bellows preached in 1859. A generation separated Bellows from Channing, at a time which witnessed a remarkable evolution in both liberal and orthodox Christian thinking. To be sure, the broad basis in both periods was still a Protestant appeal to the Scriptures as the textbook of revealed religion; but the critical Biblical studies then current on the Continent, the burgeoning of the Oxford Movement in the Church of England, the Broad Churchmanship of men like F. D. Maurice, the winds of philosophy which carried Kant's critical idealism, Hegel's intuitionism, and Comte's positivism far afield within the Christian world, could not but affect earnest American preachers.³ The earlier decades of the nineteenth century had flowered with the mature writings of Coleridge, Lamennais, Lotze, Maurice, Newman, John Stuart Mill, Schleiermacher, and D. F. Strauss — not to mention the Unitarian contributions of Channing, Andrews Norton, and the two Henry Wares. But also, and more significantly for Unitarianism, there had erupted within its own ranks a new and perilous "heresy" — Transcendentalism.

No Unitarian minister laboring in his parish could escape the theological tensions created by Emerson's Divinity School Address (1838) and the immediate divisions that developed between the "old men" and the "new radicals." What the transcendentalist controversy revealed within Unitarianism was the unsettled basis on which ultimate religious authority rested.⁴ It was on this point that Bellows focussed his attention, attempting to delineate a solution

which would have as its basis a re-vivified conception of the Christian Church as the deposit of Christian faith and the agency by which that faith could be made available to men.

Bellows believed that Christianity was a supernatural religion in the sense that God was revealed to man in the historical ministry and person of Jesus Christ. Although his Christology was certainly not that of Chalcedon, nor even of Nicaea, Bellows nevertheless insisted that Christ, though a creature, was in a pre-eminent sense God's incarnate answer to man's eternal need:

In Jesus Christ there broke into the world a mighty and shaping influence, a holy will, a spiritual sovereignty, an illuminating, warning, inspiring principle of mingled thought, affection, and volition. . . . Christ's character. . . is God's beseeching message to humanity.⁵

For the most part in his sermons Bellows was careful not to spell out in any exact theological sense his understanding of Christ's *personhood*. Rather he used the various scriptural titles, and emphasized the religious reality of Christ, not merely as a singular personal event confined to history, but as the ever active mediating and saving spirit in human history. Christ is the only source of Christianity, which binds men to God; but God is not wholly confined to Christ in his relations with men. For Bellows, it would appear, Christ best defines God for man, but this was not an *exclusive* definition that would limit the divine amplitude.

Bellows might well have agreed with Emerson's criticism that historical Christianity has dwelt "with noxious exaggeration about the *person* of Jesus,"⁶ for it would appear that what Bellows always sought first was a practical answer to the religious needs of ordinary men and women. This answer, for him, was in Christianity as the message of salvation, and the Church as the bearer of that message:

. . . Christianity supplies the motives, powers, attractions, hopes, inspirations, by which alone man is able to live the life of God in the soul, to live with God and for God, and in the successful keeping of his commandments. And the precise channel through which this vital current flows, through which God practically lends himself as a steady, utilizable force to men, is the Church, which, with its preached word, its common prayer, its sacraments and symbols, its holy days and instituted faith, is the chosen and only practical means for the continuous and systematic supply of man's great constitutional need of heavenly aid and succor, nurture and salvation. The importance of the Church does not depend upon any denial of God out of the Church; the authority of revelation does not imply any want of authority in reason or native conscience. Revealed truth is not opposed to natural or intuitive truth, nor institutional religion to natural religion. The church is the externalization of man's perpetual need of organized and systematic relations with God. . . . The Church . . . is not an object for superstitious support

or incredulous sneers; it is not a thing of the past. It has a deep foundation in the permanent nature and wants of man, the grandest place in the history of the race, and the most positive necessity in the existing wants of the world.⁷

Unlike Emerson, Bellows had a deeply rooted sense of history and the importance of the historical process. History was no mere *samsara* or endless round of births and deaths from which the individual should flee by a self-reliant flight of intuition into the *nirvana* of Absolute Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. History was rather the pattern of human life, governed by God, but in which men were free to act out their own dramas. Within history there did exist permanent structures, suited to human nature: the family, the State, and the Church. Any attempt to dissolve these *institutions*, Bellows regarded as a betrayal of the welfare of mankind. To reform them is one thing, and it should surely receive the support of all lovers of God and man, but their destruction would eventuate in chaos. This subversion of religious institutions was the great heresy of the transcendentalists, as represented first by Emerson and later by Theodore Parker. Emerson had shocked the Unitarian community with his attack on historical Christianity and his trenchant criticism and casual dismissal of the Church. His espousal of the Soul in contrast with the Church as the place where revelation is to be found appeared almost impossibly solipsistic. Theodore Parker's "Absolute Religion," as first articulated in *The Transient and Permanent in Christianity* (1841), appeared to cut Christianity loose from history; and with such a severance, the Church ceased to exist except as a moral or ethical society.

The influence of Emerson and Parker acted within traditional Unitarianism as a dissolvent, and groupings emerged which, due largely to the congregational autonomy of the churches, it proved almost impossible to knit together again. From a theological view, the very divergencies within Unitarianism precluded a united front or unified statement of beliefs. For men of Bellows's temperament the urge to unity was far stronger than that to independence. His respect for the Christian past was inclusive and synoptic, rather than critical or disjunctive. His hopes for the future of the Christian Church were all in the direction of closer harmony and eventual coalescence. He saw in the transcendentalists a challenge that had to be met if liberal Christianity was to survive within the Unitarian body:

You must not imagine that Christianity is everywhere and nowhere; every thing and nothing; a vague sentiment; another name for virtue; the mere synonyme of goodness and truth. It is a religion of facts, an historical, positive faith, supporting and illustrating and embodying doctrines in the incidents of Christ's career, and demanding for itself visible incarnation in a discipline, a worship, and a church. I believe, and I assert it in the full knowledge of all the supercilious sneers of advanced thinkers and emancipated spiritualists, transcendental or socialistic, that the decay of faith in historical Christianity and the visible Church

is at the root of the chief evils of our country and age — is the thing most to be dreaded and regretted in the tendencies of the times — the chief enemy of our political, domestic, and personal happiness.⁸

Although Bellows was not a theologian in the modern sense, he was fully convinced that a doctrinal statement of faith was important if the Church was to meet the religious needs of modern men. His chief concern was to bridge the gap which separated the past from the present, and to demonstrate to his own century that Christianity was an inclusive *catholic* religion, which only for want of a proper understanding seemed antithetical to the rationality and science of the age. For this reason, he resisted with the most cogent arguments and with rare apologetic skill the “selling out” of Christianity on the part of the transcendental Unitarians. Where they called for a religion of the soul divorced from creed and doctrine — “one with the blowing clover and the falling rain” — Bellows countered with a more clarified understanding of the historic faith:

Christianity is intended to be accurately understood; and because successive ages have failed to define it satisfactorily for their heirs, we need not conclude that no successful and exhaustive statement of it can yet be made. . . . I believe . . . that the time is approaching when a Christian theology will be more truly within the reach of the world than it has ever been since the days of the old Catholic Church.⁹

For Bellows, as a Unitarian, the future of doctrinal Christianity lay with the liberal and latitudinarian theologians in several different denominations who were attempting to articulate a faith rooted in history and yet relevant to the nineteenth century. Nor was this simply an accommodation of Christ to culture such as later liberal thinking attempted:

. . . I believe that the sober, historic Unitarianism of five-and-twenty years ago needs only to be rigidly examined, Scripture in hand, experience in full view, to prove the basis of a much nearer approach to a statement of doctrine in which universal Christendom can agree, than anything else which has been presented for ages. What has gone beyond it, has fallen into Deism; what has kept behind it, is still in motion; what has gone one side of it, is compelled, sooner or later, to fall into its track. . . . If, as a body, we could distinctly affirm, with a good conscience, that positive, historic faith — leaving the frigidness of rationalism and the indefiniteness of sentimentalism aside — I think we should start the Christian world from its theological dreaminess, and *articulate*, in wholesome, credible, inspiring words, the truth that now sticks and sputters in the throat of Christendom.¹⁰

Bellows was not simply hoping that a sectarian point of view would ultimately triumph and capture the allegiance of the universal Church, because he was never “sectarian” when he viewed the history of Christianity and the grand panorama of the Church’s role and activity in the world throughout the ages. He felt himself a member of *the* Church and the heir of its spiritual legacy. In fact, one of the great problems of the modern world was the loss of unity and

catholicity within the Church, which had to be restored if Christianity were to fulfill its mission to man. How Bellows managed to retain his doctrinal Unitarianism and yet square it with Christian orthodoxy is exceedingly interesting:

I believe that the Church, meaning the great body of visible believers, has always had in its charge and in its consciousness, the essential doctrines and the saving spirit of the Gospel, and that the decrees of the great councils, and the statements of faith of the great fathers, have been made under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. . . . The significance and power which the creed of the Church possessed and emitted, was true, wholesome, saving; whether the propositions that enunciated it were logically and eternally true or not. For instance, it was far more important that Christ's authority should be recognized as divine, than that his person should not be confounded and identified with God's own; and if this temporary identification, honestly made, was necessary to the maintenance of his spiritual supremacy in the world, then the Athanasian creed was not false in spirit, or unwise and misguided in form, though it was only temporary in character. . . . What the universal Church has taught on these subjects has been, in essence, the truth. . . .

Thus the formal Trinitarianism of the ancient creeds was always interpreted by the essential Unitarianism of the more ancient human mind and heart. If you know perfectly, and feel in every member, joint, and limb, that the Creator of the universe is God, in a sense in which no other being can be God, then it is safe to call Christ, and the Holy Ghost, God, on account of their being essential to the true revelation of this only God. But if there were any real doubt about the sole and unshared unity of the Creator, then it would not be safe. Thus the Trinitarianism of the Church is to me only an additional argument for the Unitarianism of the soul. And I doubt not the deity of Christ (until these latter days of verbal criticism came) was held by the body of the Christian Church in a way not menacing to, or truly falsifying of, the proper, sole sovereignty of the Father. It was held (as the very phrase, the *second person*, intimated) in a way that recognized dependence and inferiority.¹¹

Ingenious as this interpretation of the history of dogma is, I think it must be admitted that Bellows could not have enlisted many orthodox theologians to agree with him, and it is highly questionable how many Unitarians could accept the Athanasian Creed, even in so Pickwickian a sense. But this "reading of history" does Bellows credit. His essential aim was to bind up that which was splintered, to heal and close "credibility gaps" between Christians, orthodox and liberal, and to lay the foundations for a new understanding of a common Christian faith. It was his irenic way to insist on essentials, which in Christianity meant a profession of Jesus Christ as the revelation of God, interpreted so as to include all Christians, and to compromise on the peripheral issues that had often an accidental or temporary historical character.

The opportunity to present his views to a much larger audience than his own New York congregation came when Bellows was invited to give the chief

address before the annual meeting of the alumni of the Harvard Divinity School in July of 1859. Aware of the importance of the occasion, Bellows took extraordinary pains to sum up the themes of his earlier sermons and weld them into a systematic apology for the direction in which he felt Unitarian Christianity must move if the faith was not to be dissolved amid the competing claims of transcendental religion and nineteenth century secularism. He entitled his address *The Suspense of Faith*.

Bellows began with a question. How can a Unitarian Christian, "amid the honest antagonisms and divergent tendencies of his own people, treat of our religious times, our denominational experiences, wants, and prospects, with candor and largeness, and yet claim wholly settled convictions, clear views, and a fixed policy?"¹² This question cannot be answered apart from an examination of the history and future of the Protestant era itself, or the mental and ecclesiastical attitude of the nineteenth century. This is the analysis that must be undertaken if we are to understand what has happened within Unitarianism.

Bellows then examined those tendencies of the age and within Protestantism and Unitarianism that have produced what he called a common "suspense of faith." Much of the early work of the Unitarians had been accomplished, in so far as there had been a softening and amelioration of the bigotry, religious intolerance, and superstition that once had prevailed among the American churches. Democracy and literature, as well as the public press, he declared, have all sided with the rights of conscience, rationality of method, and freedom of inquiry, so that these are the general properties of American Christianity and no longer express the cutting edge of Unitarian advance. Even Trinitarian theology is no longer the offense it once was to reasonable men. In short, the earlier ideological battles have all been fought and the issues have shifted to new fronts. For this reason there was "an undeniable chill in the missionary zeal, an undeniable apathy in the denominational life of the body; with general prosperity, in short, there is despondency, self-questioning, and anxiety."¹³ Bellows essayed to discover an explanation by detailed consideration, in turn, of the particular, the general, and the universal reasons for this suspense of faith.

As a Protestant sect, Unitarianism had carried out the Protestant principles of critical inquiry and self-sufficiency. Carried to their logical conclusions the sufficiency of Scripture becomes human self-sufficiency and the right of private judgment ends in an absolute independence of Bible and Church: "nothing between a man's conscience and his God, vacates the Church; and with the Church, the Holy Ghost, whose function is usurped by private reason."¹⁴ This means that the Church ultimately is reduced to a "religious institution," whose total abandonment is but a short step away. The logical outcome of this process

is the denial of Christianity as a supernatural revelation, and the end of worship as a separate interest. These are the *tendencies* at work, though tendencies are not necessarily ultimated. But because Unitarianism had been at the forefront of Protestantism, it, more than any other sect, had experienced the thrust of these tendencies.

The nineteenth century, as Bellows describes it, displays a disjunction between science and faith, while the popular faith is transferred from the church to the school-house; the clergy are attacked, Sunday becomes a mere day of recreation, and even "an infidel, as such, would not perhaps stand a poor chance as a candidate for the presidency." It is an unreligious age, though not necessarily an irreligious one. "Our churches, to a great extent, and constantly more and more so, are lecture-foundations — in which the interest is less and less religious, more and more political, social and ethical. . . . To make a religion out of self-respect, right-living, self-culture — to insist that aspiration is worship, that truth is God, that goodness is religion — is the highest ambition of our modern pulpit."¹⁵

Modern science, philosophy, and literature are busy creating substitutes for religion; and while often still using traditional forms, symbols, and the language of religion, they are asserting in more or less obvious language the irrelevancy of the things themselves. In the past there was an excess of religion which did paralyze human freedom, but the nineteenth century Protestant world has produced a violent swing of the pendulum. This is what accounts for the general suspense of faith.

The universal or psychological reason for the suspense of faith is described by Bellows in terms of a dialectical interpretation of history. The relations between God and man are governed by a gravitational pull towards the Divine, and an impulsion away. "There are two motions of the spirit in relation to God, . . . a centrifugal and a centripetal motion — the motion that sends man away from God, to learn his freedom, to develop his personal powers and faculties . . . and the motion that draws him back to God, to receive the inspiration, nurture, and endowment, which he has become strong enough to hold." Human nature demands freedom in order to yield obedience; capacities must exist before they can be exercised, and so history shows that God has allowed mankind to grow into a maturity capable of receiving his revelation. "Man is not made acquainted with God by nature, and God does not come into his earliest stages of existence with distinctness, because spiritual creation must precede spiritual salvation."¹⁶ The centrifugal force of natural religion is completed by the centripetal force of Revelation.

The World and the Church may also be seen in terms of these two forces at work. The former defends human autonomy, the independence of man, his

freedom to be and do what he chooses, whereas the latter denounces human nature and curbs the unruly self-assertiveness of man. Thus the interplay of the World and the Church has been performing an indispensable duty for him: the "one *making* man, and the other *saving* him; one giving him a Being to *be saved*, and the other putting salvation into his being — one making him 'a living soul,' the other, 'a quickening spirit'." ¹⁷

The Church is subject to this same dialectical process. The Roman Catholic Church represents the centripetal force of Christianity, while Protestantism is the centrifugal force. The Roman Church leads men to worship, while the Protestant churches emphasize work; the former points to the sovereignty of God, while the latter affirms conscience, intellect, and will. "Is it not plain, then," said Bellows, "that as Protestants of the Protestants, we [Unitarians] are at the apogee of our orbit; that in us the centrifugal epoch of humanity has for this swing of the pendulum at least reached its bound." Unitarianism is no longer necessary for Protestantism; the latter will do its work and complete its oscillation independently. The Unitarians, on the other hand, have their freedom but know not what to do with it; they have enlarged their faculties and now must use them. "And this is the painful pause — this the suspended animation, seen and felt throughout Christendom — especially throughout Protestant Christendom — and more particularly throughout our more Protestantized province of the Church." ¹⁸

What will be the result if the transcendental tendencies of Emerson and Parker prevail within Unitarianism? Bellows, with penetrating insight, painted the picture:

Science, art, and culture will place themselves in the van, which the Church lately held but now deserts — and . . . the Church of the future will be the diffusion of a universal intelligence, in which natural laws shall take the place of bibles and prayer-books, and Science and Art be the high and only priests. ¹⁹

Having completed his analysis of the religious situation within Unitarianism, Bellows devoted the latter part of his address to the remedy. He insisted that man is basically an institutional being, in spite of the attempts to teach him to go it alone. He is by nature a domestic, social, political, and ecclesiastical being; but no single man can be a family, a society, a state or a church. Institutions have always existed because they are necessary for human survival. There is a sense in which there is a Church latent in humanity, anterior to any particular Church:

Christianity takes advantage of a previously existent institution, which was not simply Jewish, but human, when she pours her life through the Church. This is the reason why Christ established *his* Church, but not *the* Church; and why so little of the thought and inspiration of our Lord is used to re-construct an

institution already organized, through which his spirit was to flow; but that spirit was no less shut up in an institution and an organization that is the family . . . or than the State is, or than society is.²⁰

It was as an institution that Christianity entered meaningfully into history, and it is only as an institutional religion that Christianity can offer men the Bible, the Sacraments, and the Gospel. It is only as an institution that Christianity can fulfill its mission of salvation for mankind. The body of Christ is the universal Church, which embraces the Roman, Greek, English, and American churches; but it is always the Church, the organic, external vehicle of God's Word and the Activity of the Holy Spirit at work congregating humanity to Himself.

A man joins the Church because he is a member of the human race, but the Church cannot be interpreted merely as a synonym for humanity — a kind of humanity spelled with a capital H. "I recognize the fact that in all Christian countries," Bellows continued, "the main channel of the religious life of the people is an external organization. I know that the whole Gospel cannot be taught to individuals as individuals. I believe that the Holy Spirit communicates with Humanity, and not with private persons. God speaks to men, individual men, through their consciences; but the Holy Spirit is God coming into the world through his Word, a living word, but still a word, a spoken, taught, published word, which is neither communicated to individuals, nor from individuals, but from the Church to Humanity."²¹ With this kind of apologetic, Bellows effectively cut out Emerson's "intuitionism," and Parker's position that God was incarnate in the human race as an immanent spirit. Speaking even more bluntly to the transcendental school, Bellows asserted:

That view of Christianity which make it the magnificent outbirth of a great private individual, the Galilean peasant, saint, philosopher, and seer; or of the Gospel which makes it a business between one private man, namely, one's-self, and another private man, Jesus Christ; or of religion which, leaving out the bond which is the Church, makes it a matter between man and his God; or of the Church which establishes it fundamentally in the personal experience and worth of every good man, is a view false to the constitution of humanity, the conditions of man's historic existence and development, a profound psychological, or a wide practical analysis — false to the wants, experiences, instincts, and imaginations of men.²²

What then must Unitarians do? In what direction was Bellows pointing? What was his own answer to the questions he had raised? He replied, in the latter part of *The Suspense of Faith* and in *A Sequel to "The Suspense of Faith,"* that the Church as the Church must be maintained as a separate and distinct and indispensable institution. The Church should not be merged into other organizations or subverted by other interests. Its sacred day should not be secularized, nor its rites of Baptism and Holy Communion shorn of their mystic significance, nor its teachings rationalized away. Bellows called on his fellow Unitarian clergy to see the work of the Church as a publishing of the contents of revelation, preaching the Word, converting, regenerating, and sanctifying men's

souls, reproducing Christ's life in the commemorative celebration of holy days, with symbols and doctrines making real the events of the Gospel.

No lecture-room can do this; no preaching-man can do this; no thin, ghostly individualism or meagre congregationalism can do this. It calls for the organic, instituted, ritualized, impersonal, steady, patient work of the Church — which, taking infancy into its arms, shall baptize it, not as a family custom, but a Church sacrament; which shall speak to the growing children by imaginative symbols and holy festivals — and not merely by Sunday-school lessons and strawberry-feasts; which shall confirm them and take them into the more immediate bosom of the Church as they attain adult years, and are about to step beyond the threshold of domestic life; which shall make both marriage and burial, rites of the immediate altar — and give back to the communion-service the mystic sanctity which two centuries has been successfully striving to dispel, without gaining by this rationality any thing except the prospect of its extinction. A new Catholic Church — a Church in which the needed but painful experience of Protestantism shall have taught us how to maintain a dignified, symbolic, and mystic church-organization without the aid of the State, or the authority of the Pope — their support being now supplied by the clamorous wants of our starved imaginations and suppressed devotional instincts — this is the demand of the weary, unchurched humanity of our era.²³

The Suspense of Faith aroused, as may be imagined, no little controversy among Unitarians, and even among some interested Protestants. The *Pilot*, Boston's Roman Catholic newspaper, invited Bellows to take practical steps in the direction he seemed to point! Some Unitarians took particular exception to the call for a new Catholic Church, as a recidivist attempt to foist atavistic forms on the denomination. Bellows accepted the challenge to his position, and sought to meet the objections of his critics by delivering *A Sequel to "The Suspense of Faith"* as the first address to his congregation at All Souls' Church at the opening service after the summer vacation.

The importance of this address lies in its clarification of the earlier manifesto. No new ideas are introduced, but Bellows did articulate his vision of the future of Christianity. That vision involved a firm assurance that Christianity was a permanent possession of the human race, and that the coming great Church would incorporate the principles of both the Roman Catholic Church and the churches of the Reformation. The earlier centrifugal and centripetal forces would find a synthesis capable of harmonizing and embracing both traditions in a universal Christian Church.

I believe wholly and devoutly in the permanency of Christianity, and in the co-existence of the Church with the civilization which is its child, and is now half ready to be its parricide; and I expect confidently, absolutely, that memory and hope, history and progress, gratitude and longing, institutions and a free spirit . . . will all unite again, as they have formerly united, in building up the waste places of Zion, in clothing in beautiful garments the faith and worship of Christendom, now shivering with nakedness, and in bringing back the intellect, aspiration, and

artistic genius of the world, now divorced and languishing with home sickness, to the fountain and shelter whence they drew their ancient inspiration, and even the strength that has supported them in exile.

This is that new catholic, or universal Church, which I predict, without the mad folly of offering to inaugurate it.²⁴

In order for this great Church of the future to emerge, Bellows believed that the "rinds of temporary interpretations" of Christian doctrine had to be cast aside, and that it was the providential mission of Unitarianism to assist in this purifying and reformatory process. In no sense should Unitarianism be a competitive gospel, nor should it espouse the destruction of any vital ideas in the past history of the Church. Its *raison d'être* was rather to set up "the lights of a neglected reason, of abused human nature, and of suspected science and experience, along the track of Church history and by the side of the popular theology, that, in their new and beautiful illumination, the shadows might depart from the faces and forms of those ancient doctrines . . ."²⁵

Bellows believed that Unitarian Christianity could find itself only within the lines of the universal Church, because its exile from that parent body threatened it with decay and infidelity: "The time has arrived when Unitarianism has this option — either to turn into Rationalism, and essential, though devout and pure, *Infidelity* (which in one of its wings it threatens to become), or to turn more decidedly into the Church . . ."²⁶ This return to the Church would not be an apostasy but an essential fulfillment. Bellows was not so naive as to believe that the formularies and doctrines of the Church would be emended in order to admit the Unitarians, but he thought that the Church would prove broad enough to entertain essential Unitarian convictions, as these had their basis in Scripture and the common experience of man. The Unitarian role in Christian history had been "to stay the deluge of doubt and despair" which many honest minds experienced when the separation of the world and the Gospel had made accommodation an intellectual impossibility. Instead of Unitarianism being "a halfway house to infidelity," or "the featherbed of fallen Christians," as its critics supposed, it was rather the only intellectually respectable shelter between the orthodox Christian world and the non-Christian world of secularism.

The great error of the transcendentalists was their reductionist impulse which disowned the Scriptures in favor of individual intuition, their denial of history and tradition which vacated the Church, and their notion that men could breathe and live in "the thin and chilling air of mere religious philosophy."²⁷

They had not known how congenitally adapted to mortal wants is a positive revelation, an historical religion, an incarnated Deity, an external apparatus of doctrines and symbols, possessing authoritative quality, tangible shape, and positive testimony. These the imagined obstacles were actually the essentials of a Religion; the absolute conditions of any common faith or worship among men;

the sole basis of religious institutions, and the only means of any organic and continuous religious influence.²⁸

Christian theology, as Bellows recognized, had a unity and ecumenical continuity which could be found throughout the Roman, Greek, Anglican, and American Churches – and he might well have added the Lutheran and Calvinist traditions of the Continent, as our own twentieth century has witnessed in the theological dialogue that is taking place on an international and interecclesiastical scale. The theology and creeds of the Church represent the experience and consciousness of Christendom through the ages, and they are entitled to a co-ordinate authority with the Bible. In this sense the Church represents the continuity of humanity. Private reason is not to be disqualified, but to be used with care, just as individual judgment is used in science, politics, society, manners, literature, or taste. “We use it in all necessarily and rightly, but at our peril. Experience proves that peril to be not small.”²⁹

The experience of the nineteenth century had proven to Bellows that what men really wanted was a religion, not abstractions: “Not malic acid, but apples – not starch and gluten, but bread – not opinions, but truth; not things about God, but God himself – not things about Christ, but Christ himself – not spirituality, but the Holy Spirit.”³⁰ This spiritual hunger and thirst could be satisfied only by the Church, Catholic and Reformed in one new, universal body, chastened by its own experience of divisions and past errors of tactics. Bellows felt that his own role was to be but a prophet and harbinger of that future, but not too far off, even when Christian unity would be achieved.

In the summer of 1859, when Bellows prepared his controversial addresses, the Unitarian body was sensitive to challenges from two directions. On the one hand, Theodore Parker had recently left his pulpit in a vain search for restored health; and he had given compact statement of his transcendental faith in his autobiographical *Experience as a Minister*. At the very meeting of the Divinity School alumni at which Bellows spoke, a resolution of sympathy to Parker was sidetracked, lest sympathy for the man be interpreted as approval of his doctrine. On the other hand, there was the challenge symbolized by Frederic Dan Huntington, who was just on the point of resigning his position as Plummer Professor at Harvard to enter the ministry of the Episcopal Church. Huntington’s Unitarianism had always been rather evangelical in flavor, and Bellows had criticized him, a year or two earlier, for his “semi-desertion” of the Unitarian cause.

In the context of these counter-movements, the *Suspense of Faith* may be read as one of Bellows’s characteristic attempts to find a middle ground, based

on the proposition that one did not have to flee back to orthodoxy with Huntington in order to escape the nonhistorical individualism of the Parkerites. In this sense, the Bellows of 1859 anticipates the Bellows of 1865, even though, in the New York convention in the latter year, the problem of developing a middle position had to be confronted in terms of accommodation among rival factions rather than in terms of intellectual reconstruction. What Bellows did in 1865 has anticipations in what he said in 1859; but it was the result of an adjustment of his vision to the concrete situation in the life of the denomination that was fruitful in its later development, much more than his theoretical consideration of historical trends and human responses.

Yet the earlier statement, though less persuasive in Unitarian circles than Bellows might have wished, was amazingly prophetic so far as tendencies in the Christian Church at large are concerned, and has been in some measure vindicated by events of our day. The creation among Protestants of the National Council of Churches, and on an international scale of the World Council of Churches, and the developments within Roman Catholicism that have been inspired by Vatican Council II, all point in the direction of a general and universal Christian unity. The remarkable merging of sects and denominations in our day into larger and more catholic bodies bears out the program that Bellows foretold. Even the widespread acceptance of the liturgical movement within traditionally non-liturgical churches, and the Roman Catholic reforms of worship and congregational devotions are in line with Bellows's dream that the "waste places of Zion" would one day be clothed in beautiful garments. The Christian Church of the twentieth century has been acutely aware of the need for theological dialogue and a concern for a common consensus on matters of faith and order. Theology has once more come into its own as a common task among Christians, rather than as an isolated exercise in sectarian polemics.

But, and it must be painfully asked, where do the Unitarians and Universalists stand today? Was Bellows also correct in his prognosis that the transcendentalistic tendencies of one side of Unitarianism would ultimately, if carried out within the denominational body, deliver the historic faith over to rationalism and infidelity, though ever so pure and devout; and equally serious, would the radical individualism that accompanied these tendencies lead to institutional decay and the loss of vitality of the liberal churches themselves? This is still "the painful pause," this is "the suspended animation," that continues to grip twentieth-century Unitarianism in a suspense of faith; and it is for this reason that Henry Whitney Bellows's vision of the Church should remain alive as a viable possibility for his heirs.

NOTES

1. Frederic Henry Hedge, "Memorial Address," Appendix to J. H. Allen, *Our Liberal Movement in Theology* (Boston, 1882), pp. 203, 204, 212.
2. H. W. Bellows, *The Suspense of Faith* (New York, 1859); *A Sequel to "The Suspense of Faith"* (New York, 1859); *Re-Statements of Christian Doctrine* (New York, 1860).
3. Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, England, 1966), pp. 1-35, *passim*.
4. William R. Hutchison, *The Transcendentalist Ministers* (New Haven, 1959), p. 18.
5. Bellows, *Re-Statements*, pp. 327, 167.
6. R. W. Emerson, "Divinity School Address," in Conrad Wright, ed., *Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism* (Boston, 1961), p. 98.
7. Bellows, *Re-Statements*, pp. 268-270.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 257-259.
12. Bellows, *Suspense of Faith*, p. 3.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 16.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 19.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 23.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.
24. Bellows, *Sequel*, p. 13.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

HENRY W. BELLOWS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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The organization of the United States Sanitary Commission was Henry W. Bellows's greatest public service, and the one for which he is best remembered today. The organization of the National Conference in 1865, and his leadership in its affairs until his death in 1882, was his most important service to the Unitarian denomination. The exact nature and significance of this contribution to the Unitarian cause has been largely forgotten, however, with the result that the Unitarian debt to Bellows is not generally recognized. Furthermore, the story of the founding of the National Conference has never been told with full attention to the wealth of detail revealed in Bellows's own papers; so that, by and large, the role he played has been seen through the eyes of the "radicals" of that day, who were unsympathetic with his objectives, reluctant participants in his project, and willing critics of his successes. While the disaffection of men like Octavius Brooks Frothingham and Edward C. Towne is part of the story of those years, it is not necessarily the most significant part of it. Nor can one understand the renewed vitality of Unitarianism after two decades of stagnation if one relies chiefly on Towne's *ex parte* account of the organizing convention in New York in 1865. Between Bellows and his critics there is a balance yet to be struck; and much of the evidence is available in the Bellows Papers, in the custody of the Massachusetts Historical Society.¹

In 1865, Bellows was at the height of his career. For more than twenty-five years he had been the minister of the Church of All Souls in New York, to which he had come as a young man, recently graduated from the Harvard Divinity School. Twice already his congregation had outgrown its house of worship and had built anew. The range of his influence in Unitarian circles was extended by the *Christian Inquirer*, the weekly religious newspaper he founded in 1847, for which he wrote constantly. In the life of New York City, he had assumed a prominent role, both as a religious and as a civic leader. In the anti-slavery movement he had led his congregation to an increasingly advanced position, without, however, becoming an extremist; in the secession crisis of 1861 he had helped to mobilize Union sentiment. In 1865, he was fifty years of age; his natural powers were vigorous and undiminished; his confidence in his ability to enlist men in the willing and enthusiastic support of good causes was

sustained by his undoubted successes in the Sanitary Commission; his contacts with men of consequence throughout the country were far-reaching; his reputation was a commanding one.

During the course of the war, Bellows had become convinced that new tides of popular feeling were beginning to surge through the country, that old theological formulations were crumbling, and that the churches were entering a period of flux from which new patterns and alignments were likely to emerge. A new sense of American nationality had developed, and Americans had been brought into new relationships with one another. Non-sectarian philanthropic activity like that of the Sanitary Commission had broken down walls of denominational exclusiveness. The doctrine of human dignity had been vindicated in the abolition of slavery. Soldiers facing death on the field of battle had been thrust back to the foundations of religious faith, and away from theological debate and sectarian polemic. The actual faith by which men were living was no longer represented for them by the creeds of evangelical Christianity. As a result, Bellows argued, millions of Americans had become "thoroughly undermined in the foundation of the faith of their parents"; they were "trying to find some substitute in ethics or pseudo or real science, for a religion in which they cannot longer believe."²

In such a situation, in which sectarian lines were being shaken and the "crust of ecclesiastical and theological usage" had been broken up "as the ice is broken by the spring freshet,"³ Bellows saw an opportunity for the Unitarians to become for the first time a denomination with national influence. His conviction that this was the case was reinforced in the Spring of 1864, when he went to California to assist the San Francisco church after the untimely death of Starr King, and saw openings there for Unitarian advance on all sides, awaiting only vigorous and sustained missionary activity. "The attractions of this field are great, & almost irresistible," he wrote home:

There is much to be done which *can be done!* It is like furnishing a new house when you have the money in hand! You cant keep your hands off the new carpets, they cry so to be tacked down! All things are possible here. . . . Liberal Christianity has taken new root, & movements to multiply our Churches on this coast are fairly under hopeful consideration. I shall be disappointed if, a year hence, there are not five or six Unitarian Societies on foot.⁴

Bellows was not one to see a job to be done, and shirk his own responsibility in the matter. Early in 1864, he wrote to Edward Everett Hale: "As soon as the War is over, there will be a chance for great doings. . . . I hope to live to take an active part — when the [Sanitary Commission] is off my hands, — in this new Reformation, which will like a good householder bring forth things *new & old*, in its Church-life & creed."⁵ Towards the end of 1864, when

preliminary planning for the New York convention had begun, he wrote even more pointedly to his son:

I have a buoyant hope that we are on the verge of a grand revolution in the theological & religious views of Society & that now is the day & hour for great undertakings in our Body I feel as if my Sanitary work had been only a providential discipline & preparation for this still nobler & more imperative undertaking.⁶

Although opportunities for denominational growth were developing in many areas, it was uncertain whether the Unitarians would be able to take advantage of them. Ever since Emerson's Divinity School Address in 1838, and more particularly since Parker's South Boston Sermon in 1841, serious tensions had existed within the denomination. The more conservative wing was insistent that Christianity was of divine origin and sanction, and Jesus Christ (though not a person of the Trinity) was divinely authorized to proclaim the way of salvation to erring men. At the other extreme the "radicals" — as they were coming to call themselves — were moving toward a wholly naturalistic interpretation of religion, which allowed no specially privileged place for Jesus. Emerson had referred to the tendency of historic Christianity to dwell "with noxious exaggeration" on the person of Jesus. By way of reaction against traditional Christian piety quite as much as against orthodox Christian doctrine, some radicals had developed an extremely negative response to even the most liberal interpretation of the personality of Jesus. But to the extent that Unitarianism was becoming polarized this way, it was also becoming paralyzed, and support for the Unitarian Association was diminished. "This outbreak, if I may call it so, of Mr. Parker," insisted Samuel K. Lothrop, "disintegrated the clergy and the whole body of Unitarians. . . . Since then the Unitarian Congregationalists as a body have never been a unit, as they were during the first forty years of this century."⁷ In Lothrop's comments, there is a suggestion of an implication that Parker was somehow personally to blame for the failure of Unitarianism to retain its earlier momentum. But one does not have to accept that implication to acknowledge the essential validity of his judgment. There seems to be good reason to believe that financial support of missionary activities had been adversely affected by divisions within the Unitarian body.⁸

Historians have more often than not assumed that Bellows is to be ranked with the conservative wing of the denomination.⁹ But it was never his way to adhere to any extreme position, whether of the right or of the left, if it was possible to find a middle ground. "I am I believe on both sides of all great questions," he wrote in 1863, "because truth rides *a-horse-back*; her limbs are invisible to each other & in opposite stirrups, but her *trunk* is one."¹⁰ He acknowledged that he often found himself in difficulties because of his readiness to treat half the truth, for the time being, as the whole truth, reserving for

another occasion the counterbalancing half. But the role of mediator was the one for which he was temperamentally fitted, and he chose it consciously:

I have endeavored to bring into our own Denomination, the elements which sectarian antagonisms had for a time excluded. . . . I have sought deliberately to be on *both sides* of the theological, the political & the social questions of the day, endeavoring to do a reconciling & an impartial work, in a spirit of love & charity. This has often subjected me to charges of vacillation & changeableness, among those who merely saw the pendulum now in one & now in another position of its arc, without observing the fixed centre from which it swings so freely.¹¹

But the friends who knew him best understood him for what he was: an inveterate middle-of-the-roader, who sought always to draw the extremes closer together. Bartol's comment after his death was a just one:

Accordingly, his talent, his temper, was to mediate, harmonize, reconcile. He admitted he was on board to trim the ship, to unfurl or reef the sail, to roll the heavy, iron-laden car on trucks from side to side of the main deck to keep from careening and maintain an even keel. To what was peculiar and sometimes seemed inconsistent in his position, this was the key. He had no notion of letting any enterprise he was embarked in, by following extreme counsels, or by any exclusive tendency, go to excess.¹²

If the Unitarians were to survive, Bellows felt, the conservatives and radicals would both have to be brought closer to a middle ground, if not in theology, at least in their willingness to cooperate in common endeavors. But more than that, the Unitarian body as a whole would have to be persuaded to organize more effectively, to take seriously the problem of creating the kind of institutional structures that would enable free men to consolidate their efforts and do together what they could never do separately. Doubtless it was Bellows's experience in the Sanitary Commission that had sharpened his vision of what might be achieved. In the organization of scores of local auxiliaries, in the collection of money by sustained solicitation and subscription, in the detailed planning that was necessary for the popular and successful Sanitary Fairs, Bellows had learned how much could be done by the voluntary efforts of men and women, when brought together by able leaders in the service of a great cause. It was a similar vision of the possibilities of Liberal Christianity that he had glimpsed, and it was a comparable method of organization that seemed to him the way to success. After the Civil War, the development of industrial society in America meant that the forms of effective human association would involve larger units in many fields, business, government, and labor most obviously. Several of the religious denominations likewise began to develop new forms of national organization. Among Unitarian leaders, Bellows was the one who saw most clearly that his own denomination would also have to develop

new institutional forms with a national scope and vision, in which the laity would have to participate actively.

For this kind of constructive enterprise, the Unitarians were singularly ill prepared. They had inherited the most parish-oriented version of New England congregationalism, which had always shunned regularly-established extra-parochial structures. Doubtless this had mattered little in colonial times, when the population was only just beginning to be religiously pluralistic, and when state support of the Standing Order provided the churches with a structure to which they could attach themselves in the absence of ecclesiastical relationships. But even when times had changed, when society had become pluralistic and the Standing Order was gone, Unitarians continued to be narrowly parochial. It was assumed that churches that had survived for two hundred years with no formal organization for cooperative endeavor would continue to survive without it; and it was assumed that new churches would somehow spring up on their own with no need for intervention on the part of the older ones. Hence the refusal of many old-line Unitarians in the first half of the nineteenth century to acknowledge that there could be any legitimate kind of denominational organization, their frequent rejection of the Unitarian name, and their half-hearted support of the American Unitarian Association, even though this was no more than a voluntary association of individual subscribers.

Bellows feared that it would take an enormous effort to overcome parochialism and apathy on the part of the conservative wing. "I see nothing but sure decay for our cause, in the sybaritic sloth, the Sadducean skepticism, the contented respectability, that now clothes its older members," he wrote to Hale.¹³ The men he had in mind are easy to identify. They were the older Boston ministers, whom he characterised thus:

The elder men, old fashioned Unitarians, very *ethical* in their humor — preaching the doctrine of self-culture & personal righteousness. This part is identified with Boston respectability, & is opposed to all *vulgar publicity* & popular methods of arousing attention. Moreover it is very Congregational — sticklers for *individual* independence in the churches, and very little disposed to expect great things, or to undertake large enterprises. It is conservative, too, & very spiteful towards the transcendental or radical wing, and pretty jealous of anything which dont originate in Boston. I think Dr. Gannett may be considered as the head of this section, & George Ellis, Lothrop, Thompson, Hill, of Worcester are specimens of it.¹⁴

Mentioned separately by Bellows, though the distinction may seem to us excessively refined, is what he called a "*small section* of Evangelicals . . . of whom Rufus Ellis, Mr. Sears & a very few others are samples"; these men, he believed, "want to *secede* & are disposed to deny any fellowship with the looser & more liberal party."¹⁵

In Bellows's view, the chief problem with the Boston ministers was that they had a truncated doctrine of the Church: "Is not the notion of *the Church* as distinct from the Churches, pretty much lost out of the N-Eng^d consciousness? especially out of the Unitarian consciousness?" But if the Boston conservatives had a limited and parochial concept of the Church, the radicals were in worse shape, because they had almost none at all. "I feel a dreadful *thinness* in the philosophy & phrasing of my dear Bartol," Bellows went on to say.¹⁶ Radicalism might be intellectually alive and stimulating; but it had, it would seem, little corporate vitality. The truth is, Hale complained, "that the extreme left is very apt to select for itself a lazy sort of life — stepping out occasionally to lecture or to supply a vacant pulpit — but turning up its philosophical nose at the routine of the organization of a parish."¹⁷ Rationalism, or radicalism, Bellows was persuaded, "is *not* a *working power*, even at its *liveliest* state"; and he thought that the young men, "noble & earnest as many are," would find it out "when they attempt *work* on a grand scale — outside the little field of N. Eng. where what comes up is due to the general husbandry of the past, more than to the labors of the present farmer."¹⁸

The Boston conservatives stood for congregational self-sufficiency; this gave them strong local churches but limited horizons. The radicals stood for individual self-sufficiency and freedom; this gave them "churches of two, churches of one," — sometimes considerable intellectual vigor, but no viable institutional structures to assure survival. "These men are shy of Convention," Bellows commented, "thinking some test may be applied, some *creed* slipped round them. They take alarm at any suggestion of any standard of faith — however generous, but are partly willing to co-operate on some platform of *Work* which has no doctrine in it."¹⁹

Bellows identified himself with neither the conservatives, nor the "evangelicals," nor the radicals, but with "Broad Church men" like Clarke, Hedge, and Hale. These men and numerous others, he declared, "recognize the elements of truth in all the other sections & believe in the possibility of welding them together . . ."²⁰ There is no hint either in letters or public statements of any desire to cut off either wing. Indeed, so far as the radicals were concerned, he seems to have had more respect for them than for the conservatives, despite his disagreement with their theology and with their extreme individualism. "The real *life* in our body is in the *heretical* wing," he wrote to Hedge. "If we cut *it* off, there is nothing to move with!"²¹

Whether the middle party was large enough and strong enough to build on, Bellows felt, could only be discovered by making the attempt. Usually he was hopeful; sometimes he despaired of success; but in any event, it would be the

extent to which the New York convention would draw support from all factions that would determine success or failure. Widespread apathy or deliberate refusal to participate would disclose the judgment of history, not simply on the convention, but on the Unitarian movement itself:

It is to test our *virility*. We either *can* or *cant* propagate our species! If we are impotent, we are to show it, & make way for those who have the future in their loins. The sooner we are *known* to be as a Denomination, childless — “no son of ours succeeding,” the sooner the throne of liberal Xty will pass into the hands of another Dynasty; & if we cant fill it — it is time it should. I fear our Brothers dont know what peril of being superseded we are in. Five years of our present apathy, divisions, & meditations on our own navel, will kill us sure — if we are not dead now.... So, be it successful or a failure, I’m equally interested in putting our cause to the test of this occasion.²²

Yet the sensitivity of the radicals on the issue of intellectual freedom would pose a problem, as Bellows knew full well. No organized national religious movement could come into being, he was convinced, if it was unwilling to define for the public at large what its essential theological stance was to be. The new organization could not avoid some kind of doctrinal statement. Bellows struggled with the problem, which has proved to be a perennial one for Unitarians, of how to make a statement of belief that would be descriptive of the prevailing consensus without being limiting, that would mark out a distinctive part of the theological landscape which the Unitarians proposed to occupy, without walling it in. At the outset, he assumed that some kind of creedal statement or “pronunciamento” was called for. But the language he used shows that he sought a unitive statement of opinion, not a definition of Unitarian orthodoxy that could be used to exclude nonconformists. In January, 1865, he detailed to Hale what he had in mind:

Now I dont expect to be able to *suit every body*, in any statement; &, let the unsuited drop — but cant we make a statement which will articulate the *actual* opinions of the vast majority of thoughtful Unitarians of both wings? It is not desirable that the creed should take the terms of Science, or be in *stupid prose*. It should be somewhat mystic, & poetic in the true sense, addressed to the spiritual imagination; retaining the symbolism, but sloughing off the husks of the Church Universal (Historical). I think we might *boldly* design such a statement, which would be stable enough to stand on & fight with, & yet not so fenced in, & measurable with inch & foot lines, as to crowd out & alarm the free & the rational.²³

Enough opposition to any such statement was promptly expressed in many quarters — and not merely by the radicals — for Bellows to conclude that discussion of the matter at the convention would be divisive rather than unifying;²⁴ and so he dismissed the notion at least three weeks before the meeting assembled:

It is plain that what *I* desired in the way of a creed (without the objection of its binding authority) a creed that should show the continuity of the Christian consciousness to be in our body, & form the bridge *over* for those anxious to leave their present [straightened (?)] quarters, but *afraid* to come to us — is an idea for which our people are *not* prepared, & the value of which they don't understand. The discussion on that point is vastly better *out of Convention* than in it. *It has been discussed*, & plainly, the feeling & experience of the Body is *against* it. Let us abandon it then, altogether, in that form. . . . I think in place of a Christian symbol our people are *prepared for a practical statement* of our fundamental & distinctive ideas. . . .²⁵

Bellows was willing to adopt a "practical" statement of purpose instead of a Christian creed or "symbol," but that does not mean that he proposed to abandon Christianity as the basis for the new organization. But the reason for his loyalty to the Christian tradition was not the usual one for that generation, and so the real point of difference between him and the radicals can easily be misunderstood. In the 1840's, conservative Unitarians like Andrews Norton had confronted the Transcendentalists with a rehearsal of Christian evidences, and especially the miracles of Jesus, as the essential basis for belief in the divine origin and sanction of Christianity. The Bellows of 1865 was not that kind of conservative; Christian evidences in the traditional sense had become *peripheral* in his thought. He had read Parker's *Discourse of Religion*, and was not bothered by the concept of Absolute Religion, which is the common possession of all men everywhere.²⁶ God, he readily acknowledged, is universally present, "in the world, in Nature, in your souls, everywhere."²⁷

What he objected to in the Parkerites was not their characterization of cherished aspects of Christianity as transient expressions of Absolute Religion, but the fact that they undervalued the historical particularities through which we apprehend the Absolute. "It is very much like saying that because the *Sun* is the source of light & heat, we will give up fires on our hearths or gas & candles in our houses, & live out of doors."²⁸ People are not religious in general, Bellows seems to be saying, but are religious in a particular way as they participate in a present situation shaped by a particular historical tradition. It is the transient aspects of religion that require our care and attention, lest we be left with no religion at all. The church, in particular, is the instrument through which, for Christians, the contact with God has been sustained and made fruitful. So far as our relations with God and Christ "are not instituted, organized, methodized, they lack steadiness, force and influence." There are "natural sources of connection" with God and Christ; but "the church is the only unfailing, organized, direct connection with them, we have." Joining the church is not denying "that any life or power exists in reason, nature, literature, conscience, life to give [us] spiritual food; but only seeing that it is best to go

where express, ample and constant provision is made by God to meet that great want.”²⁹

Bellows's insistence on a Christian basis for the National Conference, then, was not so much a defence of the supernatural claims of Christianity as it was an assertion that no substitute for the historic fact of the Christian Church was available. Whatever might be said in an abstract, philosophical, timeless sense about Absolute Religion, human beings live here and now, and need the institutions that are relative to human wants and weaknesses. “We shant want Christianity in heaven, any more perhaps than the Bible – which we surely shant have. But we want it *now* prodigiously, both as the *public* Religion, and the private cultus.”³⁰

It is misleading, therefore, to see the disagreement between Bellows and the radicals – even though some of them doubtless did see it that way – as a simple conflict between conservative Christian confessionalism and a free religion unfettered by inherited intellectual dogmas or limits. What was controlling with Bellows was not Christian supernaturalism, though he accepted it, but a doctrine of the Church – that is to say, a concept of the nature and necessity of institutional religion. It was the fact that Bellows had a doctrine of the Church, while the radicals did not, that made the difference between them. The fact that he was Christian, while they were “naturalists,” or “rationalists,” or “free religionists,” has to be understood in the context of that even more basic disagreement.

Bellows was never an ideologue who believed that salvation would be found in some perfectly thought-out theological or philosophical system. Practical results were too important for him for that; and he was convinced that the way to get things done was by organizing the necessary institutions. If the acceptance of a particular ideology would lend strength and cohesion to an institution, well and good; but he was not inclined to sacrifice a necessary institution for the sake of maintaining some standard of ideological purity.

Since the denomination was, in fact, predominantly Christian, this was the obvious basis on which to start building. If the new enterprise was to grow by attracting disillusioned liberals from other Christian groups, all the more reason to erect a standard of liberal Christianity. If, as a consequence, some of the radicals developed scruples that would inhibit them from participating, however generously they might be invited, there was no reason why they should be either coerced or condemned. Bellows sincerely hoped that there would be few who would not go along, just as he hoped to draw in the Boston parochialists; but if

any remained without, it should be by their own choice, not by any act of exclusion. "We want to describe a large eno' circle to take in all who really belong with us — and provided one, & the *fixed* leg of the compasses is in the heart of Jesus Christ I care very little how wide & far the other wanders."³¹

Of course Bellows was not alone in thinking that Unitarians would have to organize a new effort of wider scope to take advantage of new opportunities. Others may not have been as conscious as he of the whole range of possibilities, and did not project schemes that were as ambitious — even grandiose — as his, but they were nevertheless making similar criticisms and suggestions. Thus in an essay read to his ministerial brethren in the Spring of 1864, James Freeman Clarke identified Individualism as "our great foe," and complained that the "social and corporate element in our religious system is very weak."³² At the annual meeting of the American Unitarian Association in May of the same year, the Rev. Carlton A. Staples spoke of the need for reorganizing missionary activity in the West, and he, like Bellows, argued that the influence of the War, and indeed the whole drift of events, had been favorable to liberal religion.³³ The same note was struck by the Rev. William J. Potter of New Bedford, whose address at the special meeting of the Association on December 7, 1864, may well have given Bellows some ideas for the elaboration of a theme that had already attracted him.³⁴ Bellows did not single-handedly produce the ferment that had begun to stir in the denomination; but more than anyone else, he brought a variety of proposals into focus, and into relationship to one another. It was his role to lay out a program of action, to enlist workers in the cause of a "new reformation," to be the tireless and eloquent spokesman for many who could not command the attention that he could, and to push through to some kind of permanent organization, more representative and hence more effective than the A.U.A.

The first formal step on the path that ultimately led to the New York convention was taken, not by Bellows, but by the Executive Committee of the Unitarian Association. Meeting in Boston on September 12, 1864, the Committee was confronted with a severe financial crisis, and the President, Rufus P. Stebbins, was asked to prepare a special appeal for funds. A vote was also passed "to appoint a Committee of three to report some plan for increasing the usefulness of the Association . . ." Named to the Committee, in addition to Stebbins, were the Rev. Charles Lowe, who was later to become the quietly tactful and efficient secretary of the Association, and Warren Sawyer, a layman from the Hollis Street Church.³⁵

At the October meeting of the Executive Committee, the Treasurer, Charles C. Smith, reported a deficit, and a month later he was authorized as a temporary expedient to dip into capital. At the November meeting, also, the special Committee, at Lowe's suggestion, proposed an extraordinary meeting of the Association on December 6th and 7th, at which the whole financial problem should be explored. The plan was approved, and details entrusted to the special Committee, now enlarged to include the Treasurer and Henry P. Kidder, a Boston banker and an active member of Edward Everett Hale's church.³⁶

The usual Autumnal Convention was not held in 1864, and so a large group was attracted to the special meeting, held at the Hollis Street Church. Bellows came on from New York, having been particularly requested by Lowe to report on California, the hope being that increased financial support for the cause of Liberal Christianity would be the result.³⁷ On Tuesday evening, December 6th, Rufus Stebbins spoke first, detailing the financial needs of the Association, the expedients that had been adopted for economical operation, the encouraging response to his special appeal that had begun to come from the churches, and the unmet calls on the limited funds of the Association. One suspects that Bellows felt that these remarks were much too prudential and cautious; for when called upon to speak next in turn, he began by asserting that the work of the Association, though carried on with zeal and integrity, "was too small to satisfy our pride, moral ambition, or spiritual desires." In vivid language he went on to describe the work Starr King had begun in California, which now needed additional impetus; he outlined the needs of Meadville and Antioch; and he urged the formation of an organization on a large scale for missionary efforts, in which the churches would be represented by delegates, lay as well as ministerial.

The following day, James P. Walker, a Boston layman whose publishing house specialized in Unitarian literature, spoke at length of the inadequate support the Association had received from the beginning. The average annual budget, as he computed it, had been only about \$8,000. He proposed a financial drive to raise \$25,000 for the current year, and gradually increasing sums thereafter. Edward Everett Hale responded that the sum should be \$100,000; and Walker's proposal was amended to that effect on motion by Henry P. Kidder. Bellows then declared that the crux of the matter was "the want of the proper machinery" for enlisting widespread and continuing support; and he proposed a committee of ten persons, three ministers and seven laymen, to be charged with the responsibility for calling a convention in New York "to consider the interests of our cause and to institute measures for its good." The resolutions by Walker and Bellows were received with great enthusiasm, and

were unanimously adopted. Needless to say, Bellows was named to head the committee, to which Hale was also appointed.³⁸

Bellows deliberately suggested a committee on which laymen would be in a majority, because he was much concerned to secure their involvement in denominational affairs. One of his recurrent criticisms of the A.U.A. was that it was too much a clerical operation. Laymen of prominence and substance were chosen, with the obvious intent of giving prestige to the undertaking. They included Henry P. Kidder of Kidder, Peabody & Co.; A. A. Low of Brooklyn, merchant and financier; and Enoch Pratt of Baltimore, capitalist and philanthropist.³⁹ It was also no accident that the convention was to meet in New York, rather than Boston, and that only four of the members of the committee were from New England. One, Artemas Carter, was from as far away as Chicago. There was, nevertheless, some criticism from western ministers that none of their number had been included, and so Bellows afterwards added George W. Hosmer of Buffalo.⁴⁰

Bellows wrote in detail to his son about the meeting in Boston:

We had a special meeting of the American Unitarian Association, on Tuesday & WedY of last week in Boston. Tuesday, I occupied pretty much the whole evening with an exposition of our interests on the Pacific Coast, with great interest on the part of the audience. Wednesday we debated the wants & prospects of our Unitarian cause. I bro't forward a scheme for reorganizing the whole denomination on a basis of *work*, & not of creed; argued the importance of a strictly representative organization, minister & two delegates from each parish, to legislate in a National Convention for the interests of the whole body; to raise large sums of money; to endow Antioch College; reanimate Meadville & stretch our cords over the Union, in a deliberate & powerful effort to meet the New Civilization & new public sentiment, developed by the War, by a Religion free, large, spirited & up to the times. I maintained that the time had come for a reanimation of our Liberal Xty & its appearance on the public Stage, in National proportions. It made a great Stir, was hailed by the young men with enthusiasm, by the middle-aged with Sympathy & offers of co-operation, & by the older ministers with *tacit acquiescence*. They did not support me openly or gladly, but were silent & non-committal. . . . I see a great future in it, & wish I had nothing else to do but to carry it out with a bold energy which would ensure success.⁴¹

So it was that the shaping of the denomination was placed largely in the waiting hands of Bellows — for it seems hard to accept as anything but a temporary aberration his comment to his son: "Our people are aroused & demand action, and I find myself in the post of leader, against my will & expectation."⁴² Hale was, in effect, second in command, with special

responsibility to talk up the convention among the Boston brethren, Of course, doubts and hesitation were expressed in some quarters. The Rev. Charles H. Brigham of Taunton was "sceptical about the practical worth of very large schemes for a body so small as ours," even though he had been named to the Committee of ten;⁴³ and it was reported that Rufus Stebbins was beginning to wonder whether he had done the right thing in allowing the new movement to receive the sanction of the A.U.A. Bellows's leadership of it was apparently resented by some:

It is very evident that there is a small, mean dissent from it, and unwillingness to enter heartily into it, on the part of a few men — I really believe that three fourths of this opposition proceeds from jealousy of Dr. Bellows. These men foresee that with his splendid gifts, his magnetic speech, his royal personality and above all his magnificent devotion to great movements and ideas, he will naturally be the leader, the Head of the new regime. If this new movement succeeds he will be at the top of the new American Ecclesiasticism. This is a consummation most devoutly not wished for by a few men who have tried to be dictators but could not [get] anybody to accept their dictation.⁴⁴

It should be kept in mind that, in the weeks that followed, both Bellows and Hale were concerned with many projects besides the New York convention. Bellows was attending regular meetings of the Board of the Sanitary Commission in Washington. Hale and he were consulting frequently with those involved in the selection of a new president for Antioch College, which they saw as a feeder for Meadville and hence an essential part of denominational strategy.⁴⁵ The *Christian Inquirer* needed a new editor; and Joseph Henry Allen, editor of the *Christian Examiner*, was negotiating for the transfer of the magazine to Bellows, so that it might be tied in with the new denominational organization.⁴⁶ Both Bellows and Hale were helping to raise the \$100,000 for the A.U.A. voted on December 7th.⁴⁷ And all of this was in addition to regular parish duties.

Nevertheless, Bellows summoned the Committee of ten to meet at his home, 59 East 20th Street, on Wednesday, January 25th; and Hale responded to Bellows's request that he go on to New York ahead of time, to "cut & dry the business of the Committee the day before it meets."⁴⁸ The attendance on January 25th was all that could have been expected. Pratt was not present; Hosmer was prevented by illness; and Brigham had to be at an installation. But substitutes were found for Pratt and Brigham, so the committee was almost full.

One needs only to compare the letter Bellows wrote to Hale ten days before the meeting, outlining his views as to what had to be done, with the official report issued at its close, to realize the extent to which the Chairman placed his stamp on the proceedings. There seem to have been only a few points

— such as the date for the convention to meet, which was appointed for April 5th and 6th — on which the Committee had to work through to a conclusion of its own.⁴⁹ On most matters, Bellows's advance preparation had laid out conclusions for the Committee to ratify. It was at this particular stage in the development of plans for the convention that Bellows had the most elaborate notions of the kind of doctrinal statement, or "rallying-cry," the convention might adopt. He outlined his views in a prepared statement, which met with general approval. While its presuppositions were unambiguously Christian, and while it suggested the use of an abridged and thoroughly Unitarianized version of the Apostles' Creed, its main concern was to find common ground on which the largest possible number might stand. It would be impossible to draw a line through the Unitarian body, declared Bellows, without leaving men of equal worth on either side; nor could any group be cut off without losing "something vital, significant, and precious." Furthermore, the Liberal Christian Church of America, of which Bellows dreamed, would be expected to attract many restless believers out of orthodox churches who had never previously had any Unitarian connection. Therefore "no excision, denial of Christian standing, or refusal of fellowship, is to be encouraged in either direction, whether towards those leaning towards the old creeds, or those leaning towards Rationalism."⁵⁰

For both Hale and Bellows, one measure of the success of the convention would be the number of churches represented and delegates, especially lay delegates, present. A convention which could win no more support than the A.U.A. had had would be, almost by definition, a failure. Hale wrote of the necessity "to lay out a plan, for approaching in advance each church of importance — & getting them to promise to be present."⁵¹ A sermon delivered by Bellows to his own congregation was printed as a sort of campaign document;⁵² and an official invitation, followed by an Address to the Churches, went out early in February.⁵³

Bellows was especially concerned about the response from parochial Boston. Hale reported that Dr. Gannett "saw difficulties unnumbered," but was nevertheless willing to attend with his two laymen.⁵⁴ Since Gannett was not at all well, this indicated genuine concern for the common cause, regardless of what Bellows may at times have said about Gannett's conservatism. Rufus Ellis, on the other hand, laid the question before the members of the First Church without recommendation, and was doubtless well content when they "voted thirty-nine to four not to send."⁵⁵ Hale was convinced that actually subtle pressure had been applied, and made sure that one hundred copies of Bellows' sermon were sent over to the First Church. "Young America in the parish was rampant," and kicked up a row, but to no avail.⁵⁶ At the Second Church, Chandler Robbins preached a sermon in which he stated that the Society had a right to vote as it

saw fit on the matter; but that if the decision was to send, he would resign. His tactics were strongly resented by some members of the church, but his threat was nonetheless effective.⁵⁷

Cyrus A. Bartol of the West Church was one of Bellows's oldest and most intimate friends, and one whose presence he particularly sought. Bartol does not fit easily into any of the usual categories of Unitarian ministers of that generation. The West Church had a strong tradition of congregational localism; and this tradition reinforced Bartol's intense, even exaggerated, transcendentalist concept of religion as a purely spiritual force. To go as an official representative of the West Church was out of the question; to go unofficially was an alternative about which he could not make up his mind, and until the very end he seemed likely to stay away. But Bellows told him there were two spare rooms in his house; one was for Hedge, the other would be for Bartol even if he did not make up his mind until the last minute. Friendship at last overcame scruples, and Bartol finally did attend, stayed as a house guest of Bellows, and observed the proceedings without participating. Bellows was grateful for his presence, even though Bartol returned home still affirming that the unseen harmony of the spirit was what really mattered, not visible cooperation in human institutions.⁵⁸

Of the radicals, Octavius Brooks Frothingham presented the greatest problem, partly, one suspects, because Bellows and he were men of very different temperaments, who tended to irritate one another. Although Bellows was very likely unaware of it, Frothingham still nursed a grievance because Bellows had not attended the dedication ceremony at his new church on December 25, 1863. The story of that earlier episode is complicated and only indirectly relevant to the New York convention; suffice it to say that a trivial matter involving a misunderstanding on both sides had left a lasting residue.⁵⁹

Frothingham viewed the coming convention, in any event, with little satisfaction, and it seemed to Bellows that his negativism was doing damage to the cause. His attitude contrasted sharply with that of John White Chadwick, the other radical in the New York area, with whom Bellows always got along well.⁶⁰ Towards the end of February, Bellows got the impression that Frothingham did not mean to come in, and at that juncture, he rather hoped he would not.⁶¹ But Frothingham could not help but feel the pressure of opinion; and at a ministers' meeting in Boston on March 14, he surprised everyone by his conciliatory tone. Hale had expected him to come "with a stiff attack on the Convention." Instead his address was "even deprecatory in its eagerness to avoid controversy"; and he went so far as to attempt a statement of consensus for the denomination "which if you took it without knowing who wrote it — would answer for one wing almost as well as for the other." Even this high point of Frothingham's willingness to cooperate was somewhat less than wholehearted, however, for he

was heard to remark to Gannett: "If you will not attack me, I will not attack you."⁶² The most that Frothingham would say in advance was that he did not intend to disrupt the proceedings:

Frothingham professes great friendliness & tells me he intends no trouble & no division — "after Convention he will withdraw *if he dont like results*" — as every body will! Still, I dont think he knows his own mind eno' to be depended [on]. I think he means well, *just now*, towards the Convention, but is capable [of] bolting, or quarrelling, or contradicting [his] purpose at 15 minutes notice—⁶³

By the middle of March, Bellows felt that representation of enough churches was assured to make the convention a success. "It is clear," he wrote to Hale, "that we shall have the weight of the Denomination in the Convention. Already the tide is turned, & is with the general ends & objects we seek."⁶⁴ His attention was now increasingly drawn to matters of detail. He had the kind of imagination that could picture vividly precisely how he hoped things would go. He could scarcely restrain himself from writing James Freeman Clarke's keynote sermon for him, so that the right points would be made with just the right emphasis.⁶⁵ When Hale met with a group in Boston to work on the Agenda, Bellows deluged him with detailed suggestions, not all of which, by any means, were accepted.⁶⁶

Bellows had something to contribute at every point, even on the matter of local arrangements. If he dominated the proceedings, it was because he had thought through the details and had a plan, not because he expected to have his own way all the time. Indeed, his effectiveness as an organizer may be seen especially in the alert way in which he incorporated the usable ideas of others into his own plans. A. A. Livermore wrote to him to argue that a layman should preside, and to suggest the name of Governor John A. Andrew of Massachusetts; and it was so arranged.⁶⁷ The *Christian Inquirer* suggested that the keynote sermon should be delivered on the evening before the business session opened, and that the recently-vacated building of the Church of the Messiah was a better place to meet than All Souls Church; and it was planned accordingly.⁶⁸

Bellows wanted a convention for the transaction of business, not a mass meeting to encourage the brethren to make speeches. This was not the way the traditional Autumnal Conventions had operated, any more than it was the way the Free Religious Association at a later date would operate. That a genuine representative body, prepared to make responsible recommendations for the benefit of the whole denomination, was something new in Unitarian experience, Bellows was well aware. He therefore sought to do what planning he could do to ensure that the convention would attend to its business. But he had a very clear sense of the difference between making sure that conclusions were reached in an orderly fashion, and making sure that certain desired conclusions were reached. "I feel the importance," he wrote to Hale, "of doing nothing by *mere force of machinery* which does not *legitimately belong* to machinery!"

To carry a policy, force conclusions, or prevent serious & thoughtful debate is no plan of mine. Let us profoundly & conscientiously respect the spirit & antecedents of the Body in the regard we pay to the rights of minorities. I only want what is necessarily a part of arithmetic & mechanics, to go smoothly — so that the true spirit of the occasion may find easy grooves to slip in, & the heavenly steed, not jump off the track, because the *human* harness breaks — all that honest arrangement can do, must be done beforehand.⁶⁹

In view of the hours that had gone into detailed planning, Hale could hardly keep a straight face when Gannett took him aside “to express his surprise that we had not formed a precise programme of operations!” But it was no intention of Hale’s to tell him of it “a moment before it was announced on the housetops.”⁷⁰ Mrs. Bellows, on the other hand, knew only too well what was going on, and was exhausted by it (and by a severe case of hives): “I do not hesitate to say to *you* of mature experience,” she wrote to Bellows’ sister, “that I entirely disapprove of the *high pressure* rate at which our dear Henry always keeps himself & all who are willing subjects to this rushing & driving system.”⁷¹

The opening event of the convention was the service of worship in Bellows’s church on Tuesday evening, April 4th. “The church was crowded,” Nannie Bellows wrote to her brother, “& Lizzie Kendall & I went early to get seats. The singing was fine, & everything went off well.”⁷² James Freeman Clarke’s sermon argued that the time had come for a new “change of base” for orthodox Christianity. The spirit of the sermon was inclusive, emphasizing that a wider cooperation is possible when it is based on a concern for Christian action rather than on doctrine. Like Bellows, Clarke sought a middle ground which was neither “Creeds and Ceremonies” on the one side nor “Naturalism and Deism” on the other, but which would enable both wings to unite and to draw in others who were Liberal Christian in fact though not in affiliation.⁷³ A careful reading of the sermon reveals passages where Clarke picked up themes from Bellows’s public and private exhortations; but it was his own sermon, and not Bellows’s. “Father did not think the sermon a very able one,” Nannie Bellows reported, “but its spirit was eminently Christian & conciliatory, & both the right & left wing were pleased, & felt more amicably disposed towards each other than before its delivery.”⁷⁴

The convention assembled for its first business session on Wednesday morning at the Broadway Atheneum, formerly Dr. Osgood’s church. Governor Andrew of Massachusetts was elected President, as planned; and the Rev. E. E. Hale presented on behalf of the committee of arrangements a series of routine resolutions dealing with the organization of the work of the convention. At that point, A. A. Low of the Church of the Saviour in Brooklyn, for whom Clarke’s sermon had been too conciliatory in tone, attempted to introduce a series of

resolutions which would have established for the convention a creedal basis of a very conservative Christian kind. This unanticipated turn of events seemed to Bellows to be an attempt to split the convention. Though the conservative tone of the resolutions did not bother him, to introduce a creedal basis was "contrary to the pacific spirit, which it was so important to maintain in the convention."⁷⁵ By Bellows's immediate intervention, the resolutions were first ruled out of order and, when introduced again later, were laid on the table, until at the very end of the convention they were referred to the Council of the Conference and never heard of again. "Never shall I forget," recalled John White Chadwick, after Bellows's death, "the noble scorn with which at the first meeting of the Conference he brought to naught the counsels of a clique that would have foisted on us a creed of desiccated phrases that had been secretly prepared by one of the most honored citizens of our own city."⁷⁶ Since Low was a wealthy man who carried great weight in the community, Bellows was fearful that no one else would call him to account if he did not, "& so he had to take the disagreeable business onto his own shoulders."⁷⁷

For Bellows, the ground on which the convention should properly stand was not represented by Low's creedalism, but by two resolutions prepared by the Business Committee, and adopted at the beginning of the afternoon session of the first day. The first declared the obligation of the Unitarian body to organize on a more comprehensive plan, "but always on principles accordant with its Congregational or independent character"; the second stated that decisions and resolutions should be understood as expressive of the opinion of the majority only, "committing in no degree those who object to them, claiming no other than a moral authority over the members of the Convention, or the Churches represented here, and are all dependent wholly for their effect upon the consent they command on their own merits." The subsequent actions of the convention were taken in the context of these affirmations, which were suggested in preliminary form in a letter from Bellows to Hale on March 28.⁷⁸

The rest of Wednesday was devoted, as planned, to reports from the American Unitarian Association, the Western Conference, and other bodies concerned with the work of the denomination. The Agenda was arranged deliberately so that the matter of permanent organization would come up on the second day. By this time, it was assumed, the convention would have discovered some sense of corporate identity, its members would have got accustomed to working together, and the laymen might have got over their initial inclination to let the ministers do all the talking.⁷⁹ In a general way, this is precisely what happened, though the laymen did not take as large a part in debate as Bellows had hoped they would. While certain of the radicals later accused Bellows of controlling the convention in dictatorial fashion, what came out of the deliberations was clearly an expression of the will of the delegates. Governor

Andrew was certainly in control of the convention from a parliamentary point of view, and Bellows and Hale were on guard against any more maneuvers of the kind Low had attempted. One of them, they had agreed, would always be on the floor of the convention when the other had to be absent at a committee meeting. But if Bellows was a strong leader of the convention, as doubtless he was, he was a leader by the consent of his followers, and it was their objectives as much as his that were achieved.

On Wednesday afternoon, a committee on permanent organization was authorized, consisting of twelve delegates, with Bellows as chairman. Since crucial recommendations came out of the deliberations of this committee, more particularly with respect to the name of the new organization and the Preamble of the Constitution, it is unfortunate that we have no record of its discussions. There is one bit of hearsay reported by Edward C. Towne that indicates that intransigence on the part of William G. Eliot of St. Louis was one reason for the conservative wording of the Preamble.⁸⁰ What position Bellows took on the matter in committee is not known. Since the committee did not accept Bellows' suggestion with respect to the name of the organization — his clear preference was "The Liberal Christian Church of America" — it is plain that it did not meekly follow his bidding. In any event, in debate he loyally and vigorously supported the recommendations of his committee.

The draft Constitution and By-Laws were presented on Thursday morning. The Constitution was a simple document, consisting of a Preamble and eight articles. It envisaged a permanent organization, to be styled the "National Conference of Unitarian Churches," to meet annually, composed of three delegates (including the minister) from each church, a Council to be responsible between annual sessions, and an advisory relationship with the A.U.A. and other denominational organs, which would continue to be "the instruments of its power."⁸¹

It soon became apparent that the only really controversial issue was the degree of inclusiveness the organization was to stand for. A year later, this issue was to be debated at Syracuse in terms of a proposed revision of the Preamble, which included references to the "Lord Jesus Christ" and his "kingdom," which the radicals regarded as creedal in effect. At New York, however, the question came up rather in terms of the name of the organization. When James Freeman Clarke attempted to amend the name by adding the words "and Independent" after the word "Unitarian," his desire to broaden the scope of the organization was one with which Bellows sympathized. But Bellows was a realistic negotiator, and he may well have felt that the agreements reached in committee had best be adhered to, lest the whole uneasy relationship with conservatives like Eliot come unstuck.

The laity, as it seemed to Bellows, had brought a strong conservative tone to the meeting, which proved to be a limitation on the kind of consensus that was possible. "*We must not aim at the best,*" Bellows had written to Hale, "*but at what can be successfully carried.*" He was prepared therefore to go no further than a broad consensus in the convention permitted. Even though he himself would have liked a more inclusive or broad-church position, he was not going to press an issue if there was a risk of stimulating "a disputatious, carping & personal spirit."⁸² He therefore urged Clarke to withdraw his amendment, with the understanding that the whole broad-church issue would be reexamined at the next annual session. After a number of modifications of the name were proposed without any of them gaining wide support, the article was adopted with but one dissenting vote.

The remaining articles as reported by the Committee of twelve were accepted unanimously. A ninth article was then proposed by the Rev. Charles G. Ames of Albany in order to state explicitly that there was no intention of excluding any church that desired to cooperate for Christian work. Once again, the intent of the proposal was one with which Bellows was in agreement; but he feared that to press the matter, given the temper of the convention, would be to "swamp the boat." Since no acceptable wording could be worked out on the floor of the convention, the motion was finally laid on the table, even though it clearly had strong support. Final adoption of the Constitution was by an overwhelming vote, perhaps as much as ten to one.⁸³

Throughout the proceedings, Bellows sought consistently to prevent either the conservatives of the radicals from forcing an issue that would split the convention. Once an accommodation had been reached in the Committee of twelve, Bellows stuck with the agreement, even on points on which he was not wholly content. The threat from A. A. Low and his conservative group was handled relatively easily, because its creedalism was unpalatable to most Unitarians, Christians and radicals alike. The problem of the radicals was more difficult, because they insisted that creedalism lurked in Christian terminology, even when anticreedal Christians like Bellows protested that there was no intention of using the Preamble as a creedal test. Bellows' sense of frustration in trying to communicate with the radicals was such that toward the end of the convention he did lapse into language which he afterwards regretted and for which he apologized, but which the radicals never allowed to be forgotten. He objected, he said, to bodies of men who claimed to be the "peculiar champions of liberty."

He yielded to no one in devotion to the spirit of liberty. If intolerance was to be found at all, it was among those who sneered at conservatives and thanked God that they were not such — sneered at those who wanted to conserve that which they deemed eternal truth. He belonged to that class who wanted to control the

spirit of the age. He accepted none of the taunts about the disgrace of this convention. He desired the sympathy and affection of both sides, but if he had to choose between the two he frankly avowed that he would go rather with Orthodoxy in any form in which it could be stated that with those who would put Jesus Christ into comparative contempt. We have made a constitution for the purpose of holding the latter to it, and if the issue is made we shall gain ten firm, good Christians for every one we lose.⁸⁴

Bellows was well pleased with the outcome of the convention. About six hundred delegates, lay and ministerial, had attended, representing well over three quarters of the churches. Not half a dozen ministers of importance had stayed away: "Dr. Furness, Putnam, Weiss, the two Ellises & Chandler Robbins were the only absentees of any note." The process of organization had been accomplished in a way that represented the desires of the majority, "on a conservative *preamble*, but with full independence in the individual churches." Bellows was especially pleased to discover that neither wing of the denomination was as large as some had supposed: "The Unitarian Denomination, which we had been talking of as if it were like a night-hawk all wings, turned out to be an *ostrich*, all body, with very insignificant wings, either right or left." The weakness of the radicals was a surprising development; and Bellows concluded, somewhat prematurely, that the denomination had "finished up *Naturalism & Transcendentalism & Parkerism*." In short, the convention "was an *absolute & entire success*."⁸⁵

Bellows' satisfaction at what was accomplished, even if it fell short of his larger hopes, was widely shared throughout the denomination; but there was one conspicuous dissenting voice. Octavius Brooks Frothingham had gone to the convention reluctantly, predisposed to be disappointed. Predictably, he found what he sought. On the following Sunday, which was Palm Sunday, he preached on "The Unitarian Convention and the Times." He accused the convention of turning away from the proclaimed goal of the Liberal Church of America to a narrower sectarianism than ever before. "The Liberal Body shrunk from its own principle, and disowned the purport of its own summons." Bellows himself came in for specific attack: the convention "clapped its hands when intellectual radicalism was denounced and spurned in intemperate language by the leading spirit of the Convention." Like Christ deserted by the multitude immediately following the hosannas of Palm Sunday, the Liberal Principle was deserted at the close of the convention. "There has never been a Convention so narrow and blind and stubborn as it was."⁸⁶

Frothingham's sermon was soon printed in the *Friend of Progress*, the editor of which had his own comment on the convention. It was "a sad and humiliating disappointment. . ." Clarke's sermon was "inconsistent in substance, incoherent in arrangement, irresolute in purpose, and wild in aim." The words of

the radicals had been "few, simple, calm, and sweet"; the words of their opponents were "many, forced, violent, and bitter." In sum, the convention

added more sectarianism to that which already existed; it disavowed the radicalism which its letter of invitation made boast of; it repelled the men who were more competent than any others, perhaps, to do the work it proposed and marked out; it drew the liberal body back within the limits of a local denomination, and rebaptized it with an old name suggestive of dogmatism and saturated with controversial animus; and instead of the great liberal church of America, it gave us an enlarged and stereotyped edition of the American Unitarian Association.⁸⁷

Other radical criticism of the convention was much more temperate, and helps to explain why it was that most of the radicals remained within the fold. Some of the most acute comments, perhaps, were made by Francis Ellingwood Abbot, who eventually did abandon the denomination, but whose disaffection is to be dated from the Syracuse meeting of the Conference the fall of the following year. Abbot reported on the New York convention to his church in Dover, N.H., in a sermon revised for the *Christian Register*. The spirit of the convention, he stated, was "in a very marked degree, harmonious, decorous, and conciliatory"; what remarks were not of that character were "made the most of by the reporters." The formal basis of the new National Conference, as represented by the Preamble and the use of the Unitarian name, represented a sectarian retreat from the broad vision of the Liberal Church of America; and many, Abbot felt, were "saddened and disappointed."

He himself was hopeful, however; for he found the "principles which practically guided the action of this convention" to have been better than the sectarian name and the conservative Preamble it adopted. Ultimately, those principles would prevail. The retention of the name Unitarian "was simply the result of old associations"; what really mattered was that the convention voted down by large majorities "all attempts to affix a dogmatic or theological meaning" to it. The sentiment of the convention was "unmistakably opposed to creeds of any form," and so he regarded those of his fellow radicals "who interpret the preamble as a creed, as decidedly in the wrong . . ." His objections to the Preamble was not that it was a creed, but that it had the ambiguity or equivocation of a verbal compromise, when with more attention and discussion a better preamble that more faithfully represented the common ground of unity could have been worked out and adopted. "I am full of hope," he insisted, "and not one whit discouraged by the purely embryonic results of our first great conference." The first steps had been taken; the logic of freedom implicit in the actions of the convention itself would make for better results another time.⁸⁸

It was Abbot's failure to persuade the Conference to improve its faulty handiwork at the next meeting, at Syracuse in 1866, that led to his break with the denomination. Two things had happened meanwhile. One of them was that Abbot himself had encountered serious discontent and criticism in his own parish in Dover, a circumstance which may well have fostered a more uncompromising spirit on his part. The other was that the majority at Syracuse seems to have been persuaded that it was better to stick with the Preamble as already adopted, since there was no assurance that any other wording would be any more widely acceptable. Both Dr. Clarke and Dr. Osgood acknowledged that Abbot's substitute wording, as proposed in 1866, might well have been adopted the year before had it been presented then; but to eliminate Christian terminology already approved would seem, rightly or wrongly, to be an abandonment of the Christian tradition. At that point, the Free Religious Association was conceived.⁸⁹

One other radical response to the New York convention must be mentioned. It was the pamphlet entitled *Unitarian Fellowship and Liberty*, by Edward C. Towne, minister of the Medford church and a close associate of Frothingham. It was a bitter attack on the convention and the part Bellows played in it. It accused him of having assumed the role of dictator, and of making his own theological opinions the test of Christian communion. The Preamble was interpreted as a creedal statement deliberately phrased by Bellows and the committee of twelve in order to drive out the radicals. At one point in the course of the debate, Thomas D. Eliot, a layman from New Bedford, proposed a restriction on the length of speeches, and the convention assented; Towne believed that this was a parliamentary device resorted to by "the managers on the platform" to prevent the radicals from having their say, and that Eliot "was their mouthpiece." These charges cannot be supported by any evidence thus far uncovered, and they are not easily reconciled with what we do know of the plans and intentions of "the managers on the platform."⁹⁰

A curious aspect of the publication of Towne's pamphlet is that it dated April 27, 1866, more than a year after the events with which it deals. It does not seem to represent Towne's initial reaction. As late as December, 1865, Joseph Henry Allen wrote to Bellows: "I hope you observed the prompt & handsome way in which Towne settled the case of the man who 'spat' on you in the Commonwealth."⁹¹ One cannot help wondering what happened to sour Towne, and whether a sequence of events in the fall of 1865 may be the explanation. Towne submitted an article somewhat critical of Frederic Henry Hedge for publication in the *Christian Examiner*, of which Allen was then editor. Since Bellows was to assume direction of the magazine at the beginning of 1866, Allen solicited his opinion. Bellows replied that he wanted all shades of Unitarian opinion represented in the journal. He did regret that this particular article was

scheduled for publication in the first issue for which he would be regarded as responsible; but he said he would not decline it, "as it is earnest, well-studied & presents legitimate considerations — which so far as they are wrong & untenable need to be met — & cannot be met until they are proposed in this public way."⁹² Allen suggested to Towne that publication be deferred to the next following issue. But early in January, long after the article had gone to the printer, Towne withdrew it, despite Allen's remonstrances, on the grounds that its publication would put Bellows in a wrong position.⁹³ It is plausible to argue that Towne resented Allen's handling of the matter, and exploded in all directions against the way in which Bellows was emerging as the dominant figure in the denomination.⁹⁴

Because of the strong tradition of intellectual freedom among Unitarians, the radical attack on Bellows has often been applauded. Yet the fact remains that it was Bellows, not the radicals, who realized the necessity of coming to grips with the implications for social organization of the development of industrial society after the Civil War. It was Bellows who made Unitarians recognize that they would have to reconstruct outmoded forms of organization if they were to survive. It was Bellows, not the radicals, who attempted a reaffirmation of the tradition of intellectual liberty within the framework of inescapable institutional development. Bellows, the theological "conservative," was the most important institutional innovator of that generation of Unitarians.

It was Bellows, too, who provided leadership for the mediating group within the Unitarian body, and thereby kept the denomination from plunging into a fatal schism. Because no division took place, it is all too easy to assume that no such danger existed. Yet the fear of division was demonstrably real, whether the threat was real or not. "Is there a serious movement to divide the denomination into 'Evangelical and Radical'?" A. D. Mayo inquired of Hale.⁹⁵ A. P. Peabody, Chandler Robbins, Gannett, Sears, and The Ellises were all thought by supporters of the convention to prefer a division; and there was a genuine feeling of relief when the outcome seemed to indicate that that danger had been averted. "It seems to me that the great gain of the meeting is that it decides the future of the Unitarian body," wrote W. W. Newell. "It is clear that we are to have no division. . . . Holding fast to this basis, if there is to be any change in old style Unitarianism it will be gradual, not sudden and convulsing."⁹⁶ Bellows' success in constructing a broad middle-ground consensus has to be weighed against his failure to satisfy the scruples of Octavius Brooks Frothingham.

For services such as these, there were not wanting men of his own generation to give him the praise that was his due. Hedge called him "our

Bishop, our Metropolitan," exercising his functions "by universal consent of the brethren."⁹⁷ John White Chadwick, himself a radical, declared that "almost every best thing that has been devised for the last seventeen years within the limits of the Unitarian denomination has taken its initiative from him or to his splendid advocacy owed its practical success."⁹⁸ And Bartol said, quite simply: "Dr. Bellows is the only leader the Unitarian body has ever had."⁹⁹

NOTES

1. The account most commonly used by historians, the one by Stow Persons, relies largely on sources unfriendly to Bellows. (Stow Persons, *Free Religion*, New Haven, 1947, esp. Chap. I.) Frank Walker, on the other hand, has taken exception to Persons's treatment, suggesting that Bellows's motives have been misunderstood and his theology incorrectly categorized. Walker's paper makes use of the Bellows Papers, but does not provide more than a preliminary probe of their riches. (Frank Walker, "Ecumenicity and Liberty: the Contribution of Henry W. Bellows to the Development of Post-Civil War Unitarianism," *Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society*, Vol. XIII, Part II, 1961, p. 11.)

2. Henry W. Bellows, *The Reformed Church of Christendom, or the Duties of Liberal Christians to the National Faith at this Crisis of Opinions* (Boston, 1865), p. 14. Bellows had spoken in this vein at least as early as May, 1863. See *Monthly Journal* of the American Unitarian Association, IV (1863), 335-38.

3. *Report of the Convention of Unitarian Churches Held in New York, on the 5th and 6th of April, 1865* (Boston, 1866), ix. See also Bellows, "Popular Creeds and the Nation's Life," *Christian Examiner*, LXXX (1866), 1-14.

4. Bellows to his sister, Eliza Dorr, Sept. 11, 1864. Massachusetts Historical Society collection of Bellows Papers (M.H.S.).

5. Bellows to Hale, Feb. 15, 1864. M.H.S.

6. Bellows to R. M. Bellows, Dec. 12, 1864. M.H.S.

7. Thornton K. Lothrop, ed., *Some Reminiscences of the Life of Samuel Kirkland Lothrop* (Cambridge, 1888), p. 202.

8. George Willis Cooke, *Unitarianism in America* (Boston, 1902), pp. 158-60.

9. Thus Stow Persons, *Free Religion*, p. 15.

10. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, Dec. 10, 1863. M.H.S.

11. Bellows to Orville Dewey, Jan. 2, 1864. M.H.S. Extensive quotations from this letter, occasioned by the twenty-fifth anniversary of Bellows's ordination, may be found in Thomas Bellows Peck, *The Bellows Genealogy* (Keene, N.H., 1898), esp. pp. 296-98.

12. Cyrus A. Bartol, "Henry Whitney Bellows," *Unitarian Review*, XVII (1882), 234.
13. Bellows to Hale, Dec. 31, 1864. M.H.S.
14. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, March 1, 1865. M.H.S. This letter (though with some errors in transcription) may be found in Walker, "Ecumenicity and Liberty . . .," 9. Bellows's criticisms of Boston parochialism were nothing new. See also Bellows, *Unitarianism in Boston: A Friendly Criticism* (New York, 1854). See also comments on Boston apathy in W. H. Savary to Hale, Dec. 8, 1864, and W. T. Clarke to Hale, Dec. 8, 1864. Hale Papers, Harvard Divinity School (H.D.S.).
15. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, March 1, 1865. M.H.S.
16. Bellows to J. F. Clarke, March 23, 1865. M.H.S.
17. Hale to Bellows, Feb. 11, 1864. M.H.S.
18. Bellows to Hedge, Dec. 13, 1864. M.H.S. The mortality rate of the "free churches" organized by radicals — Higginson's in Worcester, Samuel Johnson's in Lynn, Abbot's in Dover, N.H., Frothingham's in Jersey City and New York, even Parker's Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society — gives point to these comments.
19. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, Mar. 1, 1865. M.H.S.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Bellows to Hedge, Dec. 13, 1864. M.H.S.
22. Bellows to Hale, Jan. 16, 1865. M.H.S.
23. *Ibid.*
24. The opposition of the radicals to creedal formulations was well stated by Francis Ellingwood Abbot in a letter to the *Christian Inquirer* (March 11, 1865).
25. Bellows to Hale, March 17, 1865. M.H.S.
26. Bellows to Clarke, March 23, 1865. M.H.S.
27. Henry W. Bellows, Sermon at the ordination of E. W. Hathaway, *Christian Register*, June 30, 1866.
28. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, March 1, 1865. M.H.S.
29. Bellows, Sermon at the ordination of E. W. Hathaway, *op. cit.*
30. Bellows to Clarke, March 23, 1865. M.H.S. The final shape which these ideas took in Bellows's mind may be seen in: "Christianity and the Church to be Credited on their Merits" (1881), in H. W. Bellows, *Twenty-Four Sermons* (New York, 1886), pp. 366-93.
31. Bellows to Clarke, March 27, 1865. M.H.S.

32. J. F. Clarke, "Union of Churches," *Monthly Journal* of the A.U.A., V (1864), 201.
33. *Monthly Journal*, V (1864), 313-23, esp. 319-20.
34. William J. Potter, "The War and Liberal Theology," *Monthly Journal*, VI (1865), 65-79.
35. *Monthly Journal*, V (1864), 477-78.
36. *Monthly Journal*, V (1864), 525, 569.
37. Lowe to Bellows, Oct. 25, 1864. M.H.S.
38. A detailed report of the meeting appeared in the *Christian Register* (Dec. 10, 1864); it was reprinted in the *Christian Inquirer* (Dec. 17, 1864), and later used as the basis for the official report in the *Monthly Journal*, VI (1865), 1-20. For evidence as to the enthusiasm sparked by Bellows's resolution, see also: "How the Matter Stands," *Christian Inquirer* (Dec. 31, 1864).
39. For biographical sketches of Low and Pratt, see the *Dictionary of American Biography*.
40. Bellows to Hale, Jan. 11, 1865. M.H.S.
41. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, Dec. 12, 1864. M.H.S.
42. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, Jan. 21, 1865. M.H.S.
43. Brigham to Bellows, Jan. 13, 1865. M.H.S.
44. W. T. Clarke to Hale, Jan. 24, 1865. M.H.S.
45. Bellows to Thomas Hill, Jan. 18, 1865; to A. A. Livermore, Feb. 6, 1865. M.H.S.
46. J. H. Allen to Bellows, Jan. 20, 1865. M.H.S.
47. This drive for funds was successful, and yielded more than \$111,000. *Monthly Journal*, VI (1865), 294.
48. Bellows to Hale, Jan. 16, 1865. M.H.S.
49. The date chosen threatened to conflict with the traditional observance of Fast Day in Massachusetts; but Governor Andrew neatly solved that problem by fixing a day later in the month for the public holiday. See Hedge to Hale, Feb. 8, 1865. H.D.S.
50. The report was printed both in the *Register* and the *Inquirer* (Feb. 4, 1865). Bellows's grandest vision of what the Liberal Church of America might be was reserved for his own family: Bellows to R. N. Bellows, Jan. 30, 1865. M.H.S.
51. Hale to Bellows, Jan. 11, 1865. M.H.S. W. T. Clarke of Chelsea was especially active in helping Hale round up support. Clarke to Hale, Feb. 15, 1865. H.D.S.

52. Bellows, *The Reformed Church of Christendom, or the Duties of Liberal Christians to the National Faith at this Crisis of Opinions* (Boston, 1865).

53. Reprinted in *Report of the Convention*, vi-xi.

54. Hale to Bellows, Jan. 12, 1865. M.H.S.

55. A.B. Ellis, *Memoir of Rufus Ellis* (Boston, 1891), p. 182.

56. Hale to Bellows, March 10, 1865. M.H.S.

57. Henry B. Rogers to Bellows, March 20, 1865. M.H.S.

58. Bartol to Bellows, April 9, 1865; Bellows to Bartol, April 12, 1865. M.H.S.

59. Frothingham was still sore about it in 1891, when he published in his autobiography a curiously distorted account of it, which cannot be reconciled with the original correspondence. See O. B. Frothingham, *Recollections and Impressions, 1822-1890* (New York, 1891), pp. 118-19, with which may be compared: S. Osgood to Bellows, Dec. 19, 1863; Frothingham to Bellows, Dec. 24, 1863; Osgood to Bellows, Dec. 25, 1863; Bellows to R. N. Bellows, Dec. 25, 1863; Frothingham to Bellows, Dec. 30, 1863; Bellows to Frothingham, Dec. 30, 1863; Frothingham to Bellows, Dec. 31, 1863; all at M.H.S.

60. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, Feb. 12, 1865. M.H.S.

61. Bellows to Hale, March 1, 1865. M.H.S.

62. Hale to Bellows, March 15, 1865. M.H.S. See also W. T. Clarke to Hale, March 15, 1865. H.D.S.

63. Bellows to Hale, March 28, 1865. M.H.S.

64. Bellows to Hale, March 17, 1865. M.H.S.

65. Bellows to Clarke, March 23, 1865. M.H.S.

66. Bellows to Hale, March 17, 1865. M.H.S.

67. A. A. Livermore to Bellows, March 11, 1865. M.H.S.

68. *Christian Inquirer*, March 11, 1865; Bellows to Hale, March 13, 1865. M.H.S.

69. Bellows to Hale; March 27, 1865. M.H.S.

70. Hale to Bellows, March 27, 1865. M.H.S.

71. Mrs. Bellows to Elize Dorr, March 21, 1865. M.H.S.

72. Anna L. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, April 11, 1865. M.H.S.

73. *Report of the Convention*, pp. 3-32.

74. Anna L. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, April 11, 1865. M.H.S.
75. Anna L. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, April 11, 1865. M.H.S.
76. John White Chadwick, *Henry W. Bellows: His Life and Character. A Sermon* (New York, 1882), pp. 18-19.
77. Anna L. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, April 11, 1865. M.H.S.
78. Bellows to Hale, March 28, 1865. M.H.S.
79. Hale to Bellows, March 25, 1865; Bellows to Hale, March 17, 1865. M.H.S.
80. E. C. Towne, *Unitarian Fellowship and Liberty* (Cambridge, 1866), p. 7.
81. *Report of the Convention*, pp. 46-48.
82. Bellows to Hale, March 17, 1865. M.H.S.
83. A reasonably detailed description of the proceedings, with summaries of remarks by important speakers in debate, was printed in both the *Inquirer* and the *Register* (April 15, 1865). Towne's pamphlet gives additional details.
84. *Christian Register*, April 15, 1865.
85. Bellows to R. N. Bellows, April 12, 1865. M.H.S.
86. O. B. Frothingham, "The Unitarian Convention and the Times," *Friend of Progress*, I (1864-65), 225-30; afterwards reprinted as a tract.
87. "The Unitarian Convention," *Friend of Progress*, I (1864-65), 208-09.
88. "The Two Confederacies," *Christian Register* (June 24, 1865).
89. For the Syracuse meeting, see the *Christian Inquirer* (October 18, 1866); J.F. Clarke and F. E. Abbot, *The Battle of Syracuse* (Boston, 1884); and Stow Persons, *Free Religion*. On Abbot's career, the fullest treatment is by Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *Francis Ellingwood Abbot*, unpublished dissertation, Harvard, 1951.
90. Towne, *Unitarian Fellowship*, esp. pp. 6-17.
91. Allen to Bellows, Dec. 21, 1865. M.H.S.
92. Bellows to Allen, Nov. 11, 1865; Allen to Bellows, Nov. 13, 1865. M.H.S.
93. Allen to Bellows, Jan. 4, 1866. M.H.S. Two years later, Bellows persuaded Towne to resubmit the article. See E. C. Towne, "Christianity and Pseudo-Christianity," *Christian Examiner*, LXXXII (1867), 133-60.
94. For a judgment on the convention by a radical who did not attend, see Samuel Johnson, "Bond or Free," in *The Radical*. James Freeman Clarke responded to Johnson's

attack on his sermon, and an interchange followed, which soon diverged from the question of the convention to other issues. See *The Radical*, I (1865-66), 49-59; 148-52; 218-26; 342-47.

95. A. D. Mayo to Hale, Jan. 4, 1865. Hale Papers, H.D.S.

96. W. W. Newell to Hale, April 24, 1865. Hale Papers, H.D.S.

97. Frederic Henry Hedge, "Memorial Address," Appendix to J. H. Allen, *Our Liberal Movement in Theology* (Boston, 1882), p. 204.

98. J. W. Chadwick, *Henry W. Bellows*, p. 19.

99. C. A. Bartol, "Henry Whitney Bellows," *Unitarian Review*, XVII (1882), 238.

CEREBRAL SEMINARY: THE STORY OF THE WADE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

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All great oaks grow from little seeds, but not every tiny oak seed grows into a mighty tree. The same holds true for social institutions. All begin from ideas, but not all ideas materialize as part of the social fabric. The following is the story of an educational institution which never materialized. Had it done so, in its day it undoubtedly would have been the largest, richest, and most scientifically-oriented school for the study of religion in the Western hemisphere, and the chances are it might still maintain that position today. The school was the Wade Theological School, so named because of its chief benefactor, Cleveland industrialist and philanthropist, Jephtha Wade (1811-1890). The Wade School was to have been erected on an eight acre parcel of land in the center of a one hundred acre tract of park land Wade was donating to the city of Cleveland. Indications are that this same tract of land today houses the Cleveland Museum of Art, and therefore forms the keystone of the cultural complex known as University Circle. The School was to have been supported by, but not restricted to, members of the Unitarian faith to which Mr. Wade adhered. Its failure to materialize followed, as we shall see, from the conflict of interests between Unitarianism's Christian and non-Christian factions.

The greater part of the material for this paper has come from private letters. They reveal in fascinating detail the virtuosity and skill employed by several key figures of nineteenth century Unitarianism who cajoled and manipulated for four years (1880-1884) to try to bring their dream to fruition. These were principally the Reverend Dr. Henry Whitney Bellows (1814-1882) of All Souls Church, New York City, and the Reverend Dr. Frederick Lucian Hosmer (1840-1929) of Unity Church, Cleveland. The remainder of the data has been found in minutes, records, and other letters.¹

The nineteenth century Unitarian tradition of New England grew in close contiguity with the intellectual community at Harvard University. As the movement spread westward, several attempts were made to propagate a similar relationship between the faith and intellectual communities west of the Appalachians. Consequently Unitarians supported Antioch College at Yellow Springs, Ohio and founded Meadville Theological School at Meadville, Pennsylvania. By 1880 both institutions needed money, faculty members, and

students.² Especially was this true of Antioch which temporarily had to close its doors in June, 1881.

Henry W. Bellows was a Unitarian with a special flair for organizing — his credits include the U. S. Sanitary Commission, and the National Conference of Unitarian Churches — and a special interest in higher education. At the meeting of the National Conference of Unitarian Churches in September, 1880, at Saratoga Springs, New York, Dr. Bellows led the Conference in adopting a resolution to raise Meadville's endowment by \$50,000.³ With the welfare of Meadville on his mind, shortly thereafter while in Cleveland to dedicate the new building of the Unity Church, October 17, 1880,⁴ Bellows met the aging and generous business tycoon and church pillar, Jephtha Wade. At that time he suggested to Wade that the financier consider allocating funds for the advancement of liberal religion. In ensuing letters Bellows conceived that an appropriate contribution might be made by moving Meadville to Cleveland and outfitting it with an endowment of between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000.⁵

The idea appealed to Wade, who like other gentlemen of means facing their last years on earth, bore problems unknown to most mortals. As Wade put it: "There are two things very difficult to do — one is to make a fortune, and the other to know what to do with it."⁶ The latter was Wade's problem. Evidently he wished to create a memorial that would live after his death. At a cost of \$500,000 he had acquired a tract of four hundred acres of land two miles east of Cleveland's Public Square. One hundred he planned to give to the city as a park, and three hundred he planned to market as an exclusive residential neighborhood. Eight to ten acres of the park, he reasoned, would make an excellent location for the school, especially since forty adjacent acres had just been purchased jointly for campus space by Western Reserve College in Hudson and the new Case School of Applied Science, which had been made possible because of a \$1,000,000 gift from fellow philanthropist Case. Wade especially desired to aid Unitarianism because his only (and deceased) son had been interested in the faith.⁷

The first offer for the school was forthcoming shortly thereafter. It was the most generous Wade was to make, specifying that if Meadville would move to Cleveland and allow him to rename the school, he would add \$250,000 to its funds from which might be deducted the cost of a lot and building. This would allow for five professorships at \$3,000 apiece. Additionally Wade felt "somewhat inclined" to match any other funds up to \$250,000 for five years, bringing his total gift to \$500,000.⁸ There was one further stipulation: that Wade reserve the right to employ one or two professors for special purposes. This purpose turned out to be a provision for a chair of "Spiritual Philosophy" for the "investigation of what is claimed to be communication between departed spirits and those yet in the body."⁹ Later discussions seem to have bogged down

because neither the Unitarian officials nor Jephtha Wade remembered the exact stipulations of this original agreement.

It soon became clear to Bellows that he would have to satisfy the demands of many people before the Wade School could be established. There was, first of all, Wade himself whom Bellows characterized as "noble-minded" and "generous," "but *daft* on *spiritualism*, & with most of the limitations of self-educated or *non*-educated men, who have become rich, are growing old." There were the Huidekopers of Meadville, who had nursed the seminary there from its infancy and now were reluctant to give it up. They would have to be protected from injury and insult. There was Grindall Reynolds, Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, who would be cautious so as to avoid a repetition of the present Meadville and Antioch crises. Each was to make different and sometimes antithetical demands before agreement could be reached. Little wonder that even an "operator" as skilled as Bellows soon was reduced to saying, "There are so many strings to this scheme that I sometimes feel dizzy in pulling, or in holding them *all*."¹⁰

On November 27, 1880, an informal meeting of the Meadville trustees was held. The initial attitude of the trustees seemed somewhat cordial, perhaps because they did not take too seriously the prospect that the school actually would be moved. In general their attitude was one of sentimental attachment to the school, the town of Meadville, the education of ministers, and the Unitarian Christian faith.¹¹ They raised several objections which later played a crucial role in deciding the fate of the school: the problem of a new board of trustees, and the legal problems involved in transferring endowed funds to a new institution out of state; but they concluded that they would happily yield to any decision the Council of the National Conference of Unitarian Churches and the Board of the American Unitarian Association should make.¹² The two boards, meeting jointly in Boston on December 13, looked with favor upon the possibility of such a generous increase in endowment. Anything the Meadville trustees might decide upon, including the details of the transfer, would be satisfactory. The two boards approved the plan to incorporate a chair for the study of spiritualism, for this was in keeping with the catholic nature of the institution. The Board of the Unitarian Association also directed a committee consisting of Bellows, H. P. Kidder, and Alfred Huidekoper (later replaced by Grindall Reynolds) to consult with Wade.¹³

The possibilities for the new school were bright, but they were not to remain so after the above committee met with Jephtha Wade in Cleveland on January 16, 1881. Several problems emerged there, which as Bellows optimistically put it, needed "to be cautiously overcome with a patient spirit."¹⁴ First of all, Wade had become skeptical about sinking so great a

quantity of money into an institution limited to theological education for the small Unitarian religious body. He had perhaps come to doubt that such a school would be a sufficiently glorious monument to his memory. Whether because of religious conviction or fear of low prestige resulting from association with a small school, all Wade's later attempts were directed towards expanding the academic scope of the school. Secondly, both he and the Meadville people were concerned about getting a responsible board of trustees to manage the funds. Most importantly, he changed the original conditions of his gift and claimed that any discrepancies represented a misunderstanding of his original offer. The new offer required that the Unitarians advance \$250,000, including the endowments of both Meadville and Antioch,¹⁵ before Wade would advance his initial gift of \$250,000. Wade wanted assurance that the Unitarians had enough invested in the project that they would run the school after he built it. He seemed skeptical of their good faith. Several years earlier he had proposed giving \$150,000 to the Unitarian church in Cleveland if the other members would raise \$75,000. Only \$60,000 was raised, and although there were pledges for the other \$15,000, Wade considered the contract broken.¹⁶ Perhaps this explains why Wade was predisposed to think that it was not he who had altered the original agreement and why his earlier enthusiasm had cooled. For three months nothing was heard from Cleveland. Bellows waited patiently, albeit anxiously, so as to produce the most favorable outcome from the "delicate silence."¹⁷

The moratorium was broken when Edward Everett Hale, while on a trip to the West, called on Wade at the latter's initiative. This must have occurred on June 24.¹⁸ Hale was elated: "We had a very interesting talk — and I do not see why the thing may not be settled next week." The two apparently got along famously. They formulated plans for: 1) the endowment of the school, which was to be at least \$500,000 — 50% from Wade, 30% from Meadville, and 20% from the Unitarians (Hale thought that the equivalent amount of interest, \$5,000, might be underwritten by the A.U.A. until the \$100,000 principal was raised); and 2) the ways of distributing the endowment, namely, \$75,000 for the building, and an income of \$21,000 per year (\$425,000 at 5% per year).¹⁹

The enthusiastic team of Hale and Bellows now set about to secure a definite written agreement from Wade, Meadville, and the A.U.A. for the establishment of the school. Hale sent a letter to Wade proposing that as soon as possible the respective contributors pay their several shares to a new board of trustees, which immediately thereafter could begin construction of the building. The board of trustees, to be elected by the Council of the National Conference, was to include Mr. Wade; those from Ohio would be nominated by him. The plans envisaged not "a school for indoctrinating children, but...an institute where young men and women may resort for study on all subjects which relate to man's noblest life." The six initial professorships Hale suggested to be devoted

to: 1) the Christian religion; 2) the comparative study of religious systems; 3) the literature of religion and the arts of expression; 4) the history of religion; 5) the mutual relations of body, mind, and soul; 6) social science and the care of the suffering classes.²⁰ With this Wade seemed pleased, except that he preferred to say that the A.U.A. would raise \$250,000 which he would match.²¹ The implication of this qualification emerged the following month. Obviously Wade would not sanction the A.U.A.'s paying \$5,000 per year, if at the end of three years it had not raised its full share of \$100,000.

A meeting of the school committee of Bellows, Kidder, and Alfred Huidekoper was called in Boston for July 29, for the purpose of drawing up a formal agreement. Because of infirmities, Huidekoper had to be replaced by Grindall Reynolds.²² This move most certainly worked against the success of the endeavor, since it meant that the committee made all of its plans without representation from the cautious directorate at Meadville. The meeting successfully fulfilled its task of drafting a tentative agreement, which was put into print and sent to interested factions.²³ Wade's response to this document was secured by Hale who visited him in Cleveland. Most crucially, he reserved the right to retract his gift, if at the end of three years the Unitarians had not raised a full \$250,000.²⁴ With these criticisms in mind, Bellows, Reynolds, and a lawyer, Dorman B. Eaton of New York, met on August 29 and 30, at Walpole, New Hampshire, to draft a revised agreement. Eaton adamantly insisted that it was legally unsound for the document to be worded as a contract between Wade and the A.U.A. Thus the revised document was left binding only on Jephtha Wade.²⁵ The group hoped nevertheless that final agreement could be reached by all parties at the meeting of the Meadville trustees, scheduled for September 22, and that the fund-raising drive could get underway.

Much to Bellows' chagrin and disappointment, Wade answered in ferocity. As he put it, the new agreement bound him to pay \$250,000, but it didn't obligate the Unitarians to pay one cent. The agreement stated that when Wade paid his \$250,000, then the A.U.A. also would pay \$250,000 "as near as may be at the same time." Eaton, Wade thought, must be "on the wrong side." His letter concluded: "You speak of bringing the same lawyer here to arrange with me further details. I can only say it would be a waste of time. We shall have to get at it in some other way or drop the subject."²⁶ It must have been rare in Henry Bellows' life that the schemes of his engineering so completely fell apart as had this one. With just about a week to go before the Meadville meeting, he had no agreement from Wade. Without this he could not gain the blessing of Meadville and the A.U.A. If he changed the agreement to please the philanthropist, the school would withdraw. He wrote to his son: "I have considerable *acid* in my mouth." He did what he could. He wrote Wade, and, attempting to soothe the Clevelanders' wounds, asked him to draw up his own agreement based on his conversation with Edward Everett Hale one month earlier.²⁷

On September 22, Wade's new document was unveiled before the Meadville trustees. It called for: 1) equal contributions of not less than \$250,000 to be paid before September 1, 1884, but if \$500,000 had not been received by that date, the monies would be refunded; 2) the school was to be named "The Wade School of Religious Philosophy"; 3) a donation of land in Wade Park was contemplated, but no binding commitment was made; 4) the building was to be commenced as soon as the money was raised; 5) the school was to be open to all who wished to study and for whatever reason they came to study: "No pledge of doctrinal opinion or belief shall ever be required of any student as a condition of admission to the school or as a qualification for receiving its degree on graduation"; 6) a chair of spiritualism might be added to the faculty. The agreement was to be binding on Wade's estate in the event of his death.²⁸ Due to the cautious diplomacy of Grindall Reynolds, objections from the Meadville trustees were kept to a bare minimum. They did, however, center on issues which had been disturbing the Meadville faction for some time. 1) The school should be a Christian theological school, and so declared in its charter. 2) Its initial trustees should be acceptable to the A.U.A. as men with fidelity to the Christian purposes of the school. 3) The removal must be made under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania, and the trustees free from any lawsuits which might arise from the transfer of funds. 4) All plans should receive the approval of the Council of the National Conference, and the A.U.A. 5) No Meadville funds were to be transferred until the denomination's \$100,000 was raised. 6) The Professor of Spiritual Philosophy should be appointed with great care and caution.²⁹

In a very real way, these two proposals symbolized the tension which had been running deep between the Christian faction of Unitarianism and those who identified themselves with the non-Christian Free Religion Association, a society originated from transcendental seed which spread westward to infuse the Western Unitarian Conference. Here was a conflict of tradition versus experiment, old against the new, the conservative East versus the pioneering West. Wade surely was in sympathy with the latter, and Meadville with the former. In most instances, Henry W. Bellows had been able to act as a mediator between the two groups, but the spirit of Christianity was too deeply ingrained in him for him to wish it out of any group with which he had dealings. He was willing to compromise only to the extent that he would work to keep the school free from denominational control and therefore open always to the newest advances in theological thought while at the same time suspecting and hoping that the denomination always would remain in the *avant-garde*. But he could not tolerate a break from Christianity. Such measures would lean too dangerously near those of the F.R.A., a proximity which would condemn the leaders of the school to "perish of their folly." Bellows, therefore, began to push to eliminate the sectarianism from Meadville's proposal, while at the same time retaining

Christianity as the school's base. Christianity, he thought, was not yet "played out," and if the school refused to call itself Christian, then he would sacrifice the whole scheme — a fact which indicates how strongly he felt about this issue.³⁰

During November Edward Everett Hale and Grindall Reynolds each made overtures of going to Cleveland to get a reaction to the Meadville stipulations from the silent Wade,³¹ but it was Henry Bellows who ultimately arranged a compromise. In December he convinced Wade and F. L. Hosmer that the school should have the training of Christian ministers as one of its functions. They agreed to call the school the Wade Theological School as long as they defined "theology" as covering "what will promote the knowledge of God & the good of man"; and they conceded that the school could be called "Christian" if it neither flaunted nor was restricted to the study of Christianity.³² Immediately following Bellows's December visit, as a further inducement to the Meadville people to reach a final agreement, preparation was made to secure incorporators and a board of trustees consisting of three-fifths Ohio residents (as required by State law) to manage the school's affairs. Disagreement immediately broke out over strict requirements for attendance at annual meetings, travelling expenses, and most importantly whether or not the A.U.A. and National Conference would have a say in the selection of future trustees. Meadville favored all of these, Wade none.³³

Unitarian officials in Boston received advice from a local lawyer, Charles Allen, to the effect that the Unitarians always should maintain control of the board in order to prevent a future takeover of the school by trinitarians.³⁴ On January 16, Bellows wrote to Grindall Reynolds, asking him to keep Allen's decision from Wade so that the Clevelander might be persuaded gradually of the plan's wisdom.³⁵ This was Bellows's last letter on the subject; for on January 29, he died. To the last, he proved a shrewd diplomat and politician. With him gone, the movement to establish the Wade Theological School undoubtedly lost the only man with enough organizational "knowhow" to make the project succeed.

Wade did find out about Allen's proposals and took immediate umbrage, especially because both the A.U.A. Board, meeting on January 10, and the Council of the National Conference, meeting twelve days later, approved of the suggestion. Fortunately neither of these Unitarian groups considered the matter so important that the project would have to be sacrificed if Allen's conditions could not be met.³⁶

Meanwhile the skeptical and suspicious Meadville Board expended constant effort to discourage the transfer. Pessimistic legal opinions from sundry judges and lawyers flowed between Meadville and Boston.³⁷ The lack of a

guarantee of Unitarian control over the board of trustees loomed as a primary fear, though perhaps an unjust one, since the extant Meadville Board was equally vulnerable to a similar usurpation of Unitarian power. Hosmer suggested that Meadville could use all its funds to endow chairs of traditional theological interest, and use the Wade money for some of the more unorthodox professorships. However, every Meadville objection which could be met was countered by another list of fresh objections.³⁸

Concurrently legal advice was secured from a Philadelphia lawyer, named McMurtie. Unlike most of the others who had been consulted, he saw no reason why, if both Meadville and Cleveland partisans favored the move, there should be any legal difficulties. On April 5, Jephtha Wade wrote Grindall Reynolds complaining that where once he had been sympathetic with Meadville people, he had become disgusted after a full year had passed and no decision rendered.³⁹ The next day the trustees at Meadville decided to drop completely the thought of moving their school to Cleveland to become a part of the Wade Theological School. The legal difficulties having been removed by the McMurtie verdict, the ostensible reason for their decision became the moral issue of using funds for purposes for which, strictly speaking, they had not been given: "That the moral obligation of the Trustees is to the donors who have generously contributed to the endowment of the school at Meadville, and do directly object or do not desire said transfer."⁴⁰ Here was the result of the hours and days of work by Bellows, Hale, Reynolds, Hosmer, Wade, *et al.*, but the result was inevitable. Had the justification not been moral, it would have been something else. Meadville's Dean A. A. Livermore, who had favored the move from the start (in contrast to the Huidekopers) cited the following as actual reasons why the plan failed to pass: 1) the Huidekopers' cautious, paternalistic attitude toward the school; 2) family pride; 3) fear that ministerial training would be downgraded; 4) the negative opinion of the recent Baltimore benefactors. With these difficulties in mind, it was decided to campaign for \$20,000, the remainder of the \$50,000 the National Conference promised to add to Meadville's endowment back in 1880.⁴¹

For many enthusiasts might have waned, but surely other rejoiced, for Meadville's fate certainly was not as bad as Livermore prophesied: "...where will Meadville be? I fear *left in the ditch*, having lost the sympathy of the Unitarian body."⁴²

Temporarily, the Wade School met with a great deal of enthusiasm and renewed initiative. For the very purpose of engaging support to raise the needed \$250,000, the 1882 annual meeting of the Western Unitarian Conference was held in Cleveland. The school was envisioned as a religious symbol for the spirit of the West—"the boldest and greatest stroke for the promotion of rational religion in the West..."⁴³ Cleveland was described as the veritable Boston of the

Midwest, and the proposed educational complex of Western Reserve, Case, and Wade, as the Harvard of the Midwest. Just as Cleveland was then the showplace of the nation because of its electrical lights, so "Cleveland should be a center for the tradition of the light of natural religion."⁴⁴

On September 21 at the convention of the National Conference at Saratoga, New York, the Wade School was no less the item of excitement it had been in May for the Western Conference. The dream of having a theological school which would remain "open at the top," as Edward Everett Hale put it, was hailed as "a great providential means for the spread of the movement." A "Committee of Twelve" was appointed to formulate a fresh plan to raise the denomination's 50% share of the \$500,000 endowment.⁴⁵

Again, enthusiastic, well-meant intentions produced hurt feelings. The proofs of the printed circular announcing the committee were not submitted to Jephtha Wade for his approval. As fate would have it, Wade was listed as a resident of Chicago and Hosmer's name was omitted completely.⁴⁶ The second sore point was the method by which the Committee of Twelve tried to get Antioch's funds into their treasury. In this case the culprit was largely Edward Everett Hale. Just after Meadville pulled out, he had made an effort to redirect \$20,000 from Antioch to Cleveland. It was felt that the Unitarians ought to save their portion of the Antioch endowment for use in a Unitarian institution. (This might amount to nearly \$100,000.) Such zeal plus the factor of competition might force Meadville to yield eventually. In order that this might be accomplished, Hale and the others on the Committee drew up a plan, without Wade's consent, to pack the board of trustees with people already on Antioch's Board of Trustees. Wade mistook this as an effort to exclude him and anyone of his choosing from the board.⁴⁷

The hurt had a deeper level, however. What cut Wade to an even greater extent was the general attitude of the East towards him. In their eyes he was "simply a rich man; he was a radical; a 'spiritualist'; & 'off,' and so on."⁴⁸ Easterners were procrastinating to gain his money, but to avoid his plan for it. Perhaps, as Hale later suggested, they thought the money should go to Harvard.⁴⁹ For this reason Hosmer for some time had been urging Wade to pull out of the alliance with the Unitarian fellowship which, "*as a whole*, is not ready heartily to take up such a large & grand scheme," and which resembles "a headless body" with which it is impossible to make "headway." Instead, he thought, Wade should rely on "a large & growing constituency, the freer & fresher life among us, East & West, & that growing class of free minds, independent men out of orthodoxy, & the reverent & earnest free religious & radical men."⁵⁰ The same old suspicions, hates, and fears which had precluded Meadville's involvement were about to kill the Wade School for the second and last time.

The gravity and bitterness of the situation in the minds of Hosmer and Wade were not evident in the proceedings of the 1883 annual meeting of the Western Conference. There the idea was again endorsed and it was decided amidst great levity that women should be just as free as men to attend the new school. An article appeared in the *Christian Register* declaring that although there had been a seeming one year lull in the activity of the Committee of Twelve, plans were underway to begin immediately a campaign in the West for the \$150,000 that would be needed to secure \$350,000⁵¹ from Jephtha Wade in order to establish the School. In the autumn the fund-raising drive would spread to the less sympathetic East.⁵²

The campaign began. Chicago immediately pledged \$10,000. However, the news that Antioch would reopen its doors and keep all of its own endowment muffled the effort. A certain Mr. White of Cleveland promised to contribute \$25,000, if \$50,000 could be subscribed elsewhere, but with the failure to gain the latter, this idea too fizzled out.⁵³

When all activity had come to a virtual halt, on September 29, 1883, a committee of five, including R. N. Bellows and Grindall Reynolds, voted to take no further action to raise money in the East. The spirit of their thank you's to Jephtha Wade and optimistic hope that the school yet might come to fruition had not changed one year later when the convention of the National Conference for 1884 made their pronouncement official.⁵⁴

Just after the New Year, 1884, a very tired, exasperated Hosmer wrote to the son of the man who had sparked the Wade Theological School project more than four years earlier. He told Russell Bellows that no one had written Wade for months, and that in fact everyone had lost interest. He had written hundreds of pages of letters in pursuit of support, all to no avail.

Under these circumstances I have nothing now further to say or do; nor can I encourage you or any one else to do anything. I write you plainly, because you have been & are interested; but our joint interest cannot revive this so badly managed affair.

I now feel mortified & chagrined at the result; yet as I have said, it may have quickened thought in our own fellowship & others. . .⁵⁵

Except for a few miscellaneous documents,⁵⁶ the dream of the great theological school for Wade Park and the Unitarians was over.

The idea of the Wade School disappeared just as inconspicuously as it had been conceived. Never were its astute professors, its curious students, and its handsome building anything more than cerebral constructions. The fact is that the idea began dying within three months of the time it was first conceived. The

letters exchanged from October to December, 1880, glow with visionary dreams of what the school might become. From then on the hopes and aspirations ceased, only to be replaced by misunderstanding and misinterpretation, squabble and scandal, indignation and insult. Every incident drained life from the struggling embryo. One might say that any one of the many rifts was the crucial factor which thwarted all attempts to make the School a reality. However the unexpected and untimely death of Henry W. Bellows was without a doubt a decisive turning point in swinging fate against the School, for Bellows was a virtuoso of the art of compromise. After his passing, negotiation became less adroit and more open. For the first time news of the Wade School reached the pages of the *Christian Register*. It was almost as though an army, once bereft of its leader, had decided to charge willy-nilly into the perilous clutches of a waiting enemy. The enemy had been there from the start and it would have taken nothing less than a very powerful leader to have overcome it. That enemy was the tension between the East and the West, the Unitarian faith of tradition and the Unitarian faith of the frontier, those who wished to be called "Christians" and those who shunned the title. It was the tension between both the conservatives at Meadville and the power structure of the East, and Jeptha Wade and his supporters in the West and in the F.R.A. This same tension between the Christian and the non-Christian roots of Unitarianism has since engendered the theist-humanist controversy of the twentieth century.

The prospectus for the Wade School foreshadowed many of the marks of religious education today. Had it succeeded its contribution to the study of religions surely would have been great. In the final analysis, then, the Wade School illuminates the losses which any group can sustain even today, when it allows schismatic minutiae to overshadow the greater united cause.

NOTES

1. The greater part of this correspondence is contained in the Bellows papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston (hereafter: M.H.S.). The remaining records and correspondence are found among the archives in the vault of the Unitarian Universalist Association, Boston (hereafter: U.U.A.). The author wishes to thank those at both locations who assisted him in gathering this material.

2. For an account of the circumstances at Antioch see E.N. Claypool to Bellows, June 21, 1881. M.H.S.; C.W. Wendte, "Antioch College," *Christian Register*, July 14, 1881; A.A. Livermore, "Antioch College," *Christian Register*, Dec. 29, 1881.

For an account of the circumstances at Meadville see fragment of letter from Bellows to Kidder, evidently written shortly after the death of President Garfield, July 2, 1881. M.H.S.; Bellows to A.A. Livermore, January 1, 1881. M.H.S.; Rufus P. Stebbins, "Meadville Theological School," *Christian Register*, Jan. 1, 1881.

3. *Report of the Ninth Meeting of the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, held in Saratoga, N.Y., September 21, 22, 23, and 24, 1880 . . .* (Boston, 1881), pp. 146f.; "National Conference," *Christian Register*, Sept. 28, 1882.

4. F.L. Hosmer to H.W. Bellows, Sept. 24, 1880; Bellows to E.E. Hale, Oct. 6, 1880. M.H.S.

5. J.H. Wade to Bellows, Oct. 22, 1880; Nov. 6, 1880; Nov. 22, 1880. M.H.S.

6. Cited in letter from Alfred Huidekoper (Meadville, Pa.) to Grindall Reynolds (Boston, Mass.), Nov. 22, 1882. U.U.A.

7. Wade to Bellows, Nov. 6, 1880; Bellows to Hale, Jan. 22, 1881. M.H.S.

8. A letter from Bellows to "Solomon" (i.e. Orville Dewey), Dec. 27, 1880 (M.H.S.) gives some clue as to what use Bellows envisioned might be made of this extra \$500,000, were it to be collected: 1) the establishment of a ministerial institute for those already working, featuring such speakers as Renan and Max Mueller, i.e., men of the caliber engaged by the Hibbert Foundation; 2) a large, first-class library; 3) a preparatory school to prepare men for a theological education; 4) a lay school of divinity for those who want to be teachers; 5) a publishing house. In short, no mean undertaking!

9. Wade to Bellows, Nov. 22, 1880; Rush Shippen to Bellows, Dec. 13, 1880 citing Wade to Shippen, Nov. 13, 1880. M.H.S.

10. Bellows to A.A. Livermore (Meadville's president), Nov. 24, 1880; Reynolds to Bellows, Dec. 2, 1880. M.H.S.; Bellows to Orville Dewey, Dec. 27, 1880; for further hints at Bellows' anxiety see also Bellows to "Nannie" (Anna H. Bellows), Jan. 16, 1881. M.H.S.

11. In attendance were A.A. Livermore, Professors Cary and Huidekoper, Miss Elizabeth Huidekoper, and Mr. Alfred Huidekoper. The emotive sentiments informing these people's decisions are best seen in the following citation from the aged Alfred Huidekoper who had aided in founding the school some forty years earlier: "After having put so much of ourselves into this school for more than a third of a century, we feel a little as you would

probably do if after an equal time spent in moulding the religious character of a congregation, instructing it in its moral and social duties, baptising its children, marrying its young people and and laying away its dead in Greenwood, you should be asked to turn it over to the care of a stranger with no time hallowed sympathies and affections to guide him in his ministerial administration." A. Huidekoper to Bellows, July 18, 1881. M.H.S.

12. Livermore to Bellows, Nov. 27, 1880. M.H.S.

13. Shippen to Bellows, Dec. 13, 1880; Reynolds to Bellows, Dec. 15, 1880. M.H.S.; A.U.A. Board minutes, Dec. 13, 1880. U.U.A.; Grindall Reynolds, "Meadville Theological School: Why It Declines Mr. Wade's Gift," *Christian Register*, April 27, 1882.

14. Bellows to Hale, Jan. 22, 1881. M.H.S.

15. Unitarians soon came to recognize that the easiest way for them to meet their initial obligation was to utilize the funds already in the endowments of the two schools. Conceivably this would have covered nearly all the initial expense. Getting the money was another matter. If Meadville moved, virtually all of its funds would go with it. There were several plans suggesting what to do with Antioch. Some had favored moving it to Cincinnati, some transforming it into a preparatory school, and still others, using the funds at Cleveland. Antioch trustee Charles Wendte, then minister in Cincinnati, favored this last approach and prompted Wade to request the funds. Strangely this source of money, which would have amounted to about \$109,000, was never seriously pursued. When the College decided that it would reopen in the Fall of 1882, the idea was dropped completely. Reynolds to Bellows, Dec. 2, 1880; Wendte to Hale, Jan. 4, 1881; Bellows to Hale, Jan. 22, 1881; Hale to Bellows, June 24, 1881; Bellows to Hale, July 7, 1881. M.H.S.; "The Antioch View," *Christian Register*, Aug. 31, 1882.

16. Bellows to Hale, Jan. 22, 1881; Wade to Bellows, March 12, 1881; Hale to Bellows, June 29, 1881. M.H.S.

17. Bellows to Hale, January 22, 1881; July 2, 1881. M.H.S.; Bellows to Reynolds, July 7, 1881. U.U.A.

18. On June 29, Hale spoke of having spent "Friday evening" with Wade. Hale to Bellows, June 29, 1881. M.H.S.

19. Hale to Bellows, June 29, 1881. M.H.S.

20. Hale to Wade included in Hale to Bellows, July 7, 1881; Bellows to Hale, July 7, 1881. M.H.S.; Bellows to Reynolds, July 7, 1881. U.U.A.

21. Wade to Bellows, July 11, 1881. M.H.S.

22. Huidekoper to Bellows, July 18, 1881. M.H.S. Grindall Reynolds was on the Board of Trustees at Meadville, but unlike most of his associates, he favored moving the school to Cleveland. He did, however, shrink from pledging to the school so great a portion of the A.U.A. budget as \$5,000 per year, preferring to capture Antioch's endowment. (Reynolds to Bellows, July 9, 1881. M.H.S.) Bellows for some unknown reason seemed to shy from attaching the Antioch funds. Uncertain of Reynolds' support, he was hesitant to bring him on the committee, but later changed his mind. Bellows to Hale, July 20, 1881. M.H.S.

23. Bellows to Hale, July 30, 1881. M.H.S. No copies of this agreement have been located.

24. Hale to Bellows, Aug. 16, 1881. M.H.S.

25. Bellows to Hale, Sept. 1, 1881; Sept. 16, 1881. M.H.S. Dorman B. Eaton, a member of Bellows' church, was a well-known lawyer, remembered for his advocacy of civil service reform. See the sketch in the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

26. Wade to Bellows, Sept. 12, 1881. M.H.S.

27. Bellows to Russell N. Bellows, Sept. 17, 1881. M.H.S.; Bellows to Reynolds, Sept. 15, 1881. U.U.A.

28. Wade to Reynolds, Sept. 1881. U.U.A. See Appendix A for complete document.

29. A. Huidekoper to Reynolds, Sept. 22, 1881. U.U.A. and Bellows to R. N. Bellows and Mrs. Bellows, Sept. 22, 1881. M.H.S. See Appendix A. For some time the Meadville trustees had been fretting about the legal and ideological differences involved in transferring the school. At an earlier meeting on April 6, consultation was reported with two lawyers and three judges, each of whom doubted the possibility of transfer. Apparently this was because Pennsylvania law made no provision for transferring trusts out of state. In order to secure this, a vote of the legislature would be required, but the legislature was not scheduled to meet for some time. Even if such a bill were to be passed, the Board still would have to contend with the legal and moral problems involved when an old donor wished his funds to remain at the school in Pennsylvania since that was the purpose for which he gave the money. Added to this were anxieties over the proposed lack of Unitarian and Christian direction, the vague nature of the spiritualistic chair, the issue of who would be bound and how, the disregard for the Christian ministry, the romantic, sentimental nature of the town and school at Meadville, the personal interests of the Huidekoper family, and suspicion of the non-Christian left-wing of the denomination. From this one can get a reasonable idea of the impediments which eventually would cause a collapse of the complete plan to transfer Meadville. F. Huidekoper to Reynolds, July 21, 1881; July 27, 1881. U.U.A.; Reynolds to Bellows, Aug. 17, 1881. M.H.S.; F. Huidekoper to Reynolds, Aug. 19, 1881; Aug. 27, 1881. U.U.A.

30. Bellows to Hale, Oct. 22, 1881; Bellows to Orville Dewey, Sept. 27, 1881; Bellows to R. N. Bellows, Sept. 27, 1881; Hale to Bellows, Oct. 13, 1881; Reynolds to Bellows, Oct. 21, 1881, M.H.S.; Bellows to Reynolds, Nov. 25, 1881. U.U.A.: See also Reynolds to Bellows, Nov. 3, 1881, M.H.S., in which reference is made to an article in the October 16 issue of *Unity*, the magazine of the Western Conference, which led Reynolds to suspect that Jephtha Wade was in league with the Western Conference to erect a corporation for the establishment of "a Free Religious, if not anti-Christian school."

31. There are intimations of sensitivity on the part of Bellows because Hale had assumed an aggressive role in the Wade negotiations and had made a better impression upon philanthropist Wade during the month of August. Uneasiness occurred when Hale entered the negotiations in July (Hale to Bellows, June 29, 1881; Bellows to Hale, July 2, 1881, M.H.S.). When it was learned that Hale might return to Cleveland during November, Bellows wrote Reynolds that Jephtha Wade favored Hale because "he is not quite as explicit as I am used to be & has flattered him more — as well as for better reasons which I can appreciate." Bellows to Reynolds, Nov. 2, 1881. U.U.A.

32. Bellows to Reynolds, Dec. 14, 1881. U.U.A.
33. Bellows to Reynolds, Dec. 14, 1881. U.U.A.; Reynolds to Bellows, Dec. 16, 1881; Dec. 27, 1881. M.H.S. For Wade's corrected copy of the proposed Articles of Corporation, see Appendix B.
34. Charles Allen to Reynolds, Jan. 16, 1882. U.U.A.
35. Bellows to Reynolds, Jan. 16, 1882. U.U.A.
36. Wade to Reynolds, Jan. 30, 1882. U.U.A.; Reynolds to Bellows, Jan. 10, 1882; Jan. 22, 1882. M.H.S.
37. F. Huidekoper to Reynolds, Feb. 6, 1882; Feb. 14, 1882; Feb. 27, 1882. U.U.A.
38. Hosmer to Reynolds, March 2, 1882. U.U.A. Among the objections raised by the Meadville board were these:
 - 1 — The school might become infested with atheists, which would create an uncomfortable atmosphere in the classroom. (Note how this expresses a suspicion of the Free Religious Association and its influence in the Western churches.)
 - 2 — Recent generous contributors from Baltimore were opposed to the move.
 - 3 — The transfer would preclude the possibility that the school could receive students and endowment from the *Union der Evangelisch Protestantischen Gemeinden Nord Amerikas*, which had been interested in utilizing the school for the purpose of educating some of its clergy. (F. Huidekoper to Reynolds, Feb. 27, 1882. U.U.A.)
39. Wade to Reynolds, April 5, 1882. U.U.A. G. Reynolds, "Meadville Theological School: Why It Declines Mr. Wade's Gift," *Christian Register*, April 27, 1882. See also the debate carried on in the pages on the *Christian Register* during the summer of 1882 as to the practicability of the McMurtie recommendation: F. Huidekoper, "Meadville Theological School," *Christian Register*, May 4, 1882; "Meadville Theological School: The Trustees' Statement," *Christian Register*, June 1, 1882; George A. Thayer, "Meadville Theological School," *Christian Register*, Aug. 31, 1882; Thomas Hill, "Meadville Once More," *Christian Register*, Sept. 7, 1882; F. Huidekoper, "Meadville Again," *Christian Register*, Sept. 14, 1882. See also F. Huidekoper to Reynolds, Aug. 1, 1882; August 8, 1882. U.U.A.
40. Grindall Reynolds, "Meadville Theological School: Why It Declines Mr. Wade's Gift," *Christian Register*, April 27, 1882.
41. Livermore to Reynolds, April 6, 1882. U.U.A.
42. *Ibid.*
43. "Western Unitarian Conference," *Christian Register*, May 11, 1882. "Wade Theological School," *Christian Register*, June 15, 1882.
44. Edwin D. Mead, "Cleveland," *Christian Register*, July 20, 1882.

45. "National Conference," *Christian Register*, Sept. 28, 1882. Those appointed to the Committee were F. H. Hedge, Grindall Reynolds, Jenkin L. Jones, H. P. Kidder, Edward Everett Hale, F. L. Hosmer, E. W. Clark, W. E. Leighton, James De Normandie, J. C. Learned, Francis G. Peabody, William C. Gannett, plus Jephtha Wade.

46. Hosmer to Reynolds, Nov. 6, 1882. U.U.A.; Hosmer to Hale, Dec. 14, 1882. M.H.S.

47. Hale to Reynolds, April 12, 1882. U.U.A.; N. P. Gilman, "The Wade School — One Way," *Christian Register*, Aug. 3, 1882; Hale to Wendte, Sept. 8, 1882; Hosmer to Hale, Dec. 14, 1882; Hosmer to R. N. Bellows, April 26, 1883. M.H.S.

48. Hosmer to R. N. Bellows, Feb. 22, 1883. M.H.S.

49. Hale to R. N. Bellows, Aug. 13, 1883. M.H.S.

50. Hosmer to R. N. Bellows, Feb. 22, 1883; Hosmer to R. N. Bellows, April 26, 1883. M.H.S.

51. In early negotiations, Wade had agreed to pay one half of the basic endowment. However, some time after the establishment of the Committee of Twelve, Wade must have changed his offer to \$350,000 if the Unitarians would raise \$150,000. There is no indication of negotiations on this point, but letters after December 14 utilize the revised figures. Hosmer to Hale, Dec. 14, 1882; Hosmer to R. N. Bellows, Feb. 22, 1883. M.H.S.; "The Wade School," *Christian Register*, May 24, 1883.

52. "The Western Conference," *Christian Register*, May 24, 1883; "The Wade School," *Christian Register*, May 24, 1883.

53. G. W. Batchelor to R. N. Bellows, Jan. 14, 1884. M.H.S.

54. Wade School Meeting, September 29, 1883. M.H.S.; *Official Report of the Proceedings of the Eleventh Meeting of the National Conference of the Unitarian and other Christian Churches, Held at Saratoga, New York, September 22-26, 1884*, p. 12.

55. Hosmer to R. N. Bellows, Jan. 9, 1884. M.H.S.

56. Cf. notes 53, 55 above. A letter dated February 5, 1884 from Hale to R. N. Bellows (M.H.S.) declares: "I have seen lots of people about the Wade School, — and I am much encouraged. Can you meet me at Reynolds's at 1. p.m. tomorrow, — Monday?"

A note from Hosmer to Bellows, dated December 1884, acknowledges a notice of a council meeting between those people — both East and West — who were associated with the School: J. L. Jones, Bellows, Hosmer. From a letter to his sister Annie, dated January 18, 1885, it is known that Bellows was in Boston on business, but whether or not the Wade School was discussed never will be known.

APPENDIX A

JEPHTHA WADE'S PROPOSAL TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MEADVILLE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL, SEPTEMBER 22, 1881

Wishing to aid in the establishment of a school in Cleveland, O., for the study and promulgation of truth without regard to creeds or existing prejudices, and at the same time to put it in the power of the Unitarian denomination to enlarge and improve upon its Western school of Divinity, I make the following propositions:

If we can agree on a Board of Trustees, Officers, Articles of Association, and the general plan of a new Institution, on the broad basis of truth, science, and reason, (of which I have no doubt) and if the Unitarians and others interested in the study of man and his true relations to God and the next world, will unite in the effort and will pay before Sept. 1, 1884, to the new organization for the building and permanent maintainance of such an Institution not less than two-hundred fifty thousand dollars, (\$250,000.) I will pay promptly, on being notified of any such payment or payments by other parties to said fund within said time, an equal amount until I shall have paid a sum equal to the amount paid by all others,—but not exceeding five hundred thousand dollars, (\$500,000.) to be paid by me: And I will undertake so to do in such legal form as to bind me and my estate upon the following conditions:

First: If by Sept. 1, 1884, the said fund shall not amount to five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.) from all sources, then and in the event, such amount as shall have been paid, with all its increase and accumulation, by interest or other ways, shall be refunded to the several parties having paid the same, except so much thereof as may have been necessarily expended in taking care of said funds:

Second: The Institution, if built, shall be named and called the "*Wade School of Religious Philosophy*":

Third: As soon as said funds shall amount to five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.) from all sources—(provided every thing pertaining to said Institution up to that time shall meet with my approval)—I will convey by deed to said Institution, as an additional contribution, the site or piece of ground in Wade Park reserved by me for an institution: This last, however, is not to be made or regarded as a binding obligation,—but shall be left for me to do, or not to do, as I may at that time think proper:

Fourth: The building shall be commenced as soon as five hundred thousand dollars, (\$500,000.) is paid in, and not sooner. It shall be made fire-proof, and finished in a substantial manner, as soon thereafter as practicable:

Fifth: No pledge of doctrinal opinion or belief shall be required of any student as a condition of admission to the school or as a qualification for receiving its degrees on graduation:

Sixth: The Board of Trustees shall, if requested by me so to do, establish a branch or chair in said Institution for the study and teaching of such truths as from time to time may be discovered, or deemed worthy of investigation pertaining to the immortality of man, and communication between the living and the departed. If such a Professorship shall be established at my request, I will donate for its support an additional sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.): the Professor for this chair to be selected by me, subject to the approval of the Trustees, and to be called "Professor of Spiritual Philosophy" unless another name shall be mutually agreed upon.

Very respectfully
Your obt servt
J.H. Wade

APPENDIX B

PROPOSED ARTICLES OF CORPORATION FOR THE WADE SCHOOL, SUBMITTED DECEMBER, 1881

Article 1st The name of the Corporation shall be the Wade Theological School

Article 2nd The said Corporation shall be located in the City of Cleveland, in the County of Cuyahoga, and the State of Ohio

Article 3rd The purpose for which said Corporation is formed is to receive such donations and contributions as may be offered, and by the use of the rents, uses, profits, and proceeds thereof organize, establish, and maintain in said City of Cleveland an institution of learning, and to hold and apply for the same purpose any funds or property lawfully acquired by the Corporation.

Article 4th The object of said institution shall be to instruct students preparing for the Christian Ministry, and to furnish others an opportunity for the study of theology; which is here understood to cover all studies that promote the knowledge of God and the good of humanity.

Article 5th No doctrinal tests in said School shall be made a condition either of entrance or graduation.

In witness whereof we hereto subscribe our names, and affix our personal seals at Cleveland, Ohio this day of A.D. 1881.

(Wade to either Bellows or Reynolds, Dec. 23, 1881, U.U.A.)

Persons suggested as a Board of Trustees:—J. H. Wade, J. H. Wade, Jr., H. B. Payne, Rev. F. L. Hosmer of Cleveland; M. E. Ingalls of Cincinnati, Ohio; George E. Leighton of St. Louis, Mo.; Rev. Brooke Herford of Chicago, Ill.; Carleton Sprague, of Buffalo, N. Y.; Samuel F. Miller, of Washington, D. C.; Rev. Henry W. Bellows, D.D., of New York, N. Y.; Rev. Henry H. Barber of Somerville, Mass.; Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D.D., Rev. Edward E. Hale, D.D., Henry P. Kidder, of Boston, Mass.; John D. Long, of Hingham, Mass.; Rev. Grindall Reynolds, of Concord, Mass.; Rev. George A. Thayer, of Boston

(Minutes of the A.U.A., Jan. 9, 1882.
Records of the Executive Committee,
vol. V (1874-84), p. 312. U.U.A.)

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